

THE
Happy Congregation; ^{1507/1452.}

OR, THE
Great Gathering of the PEOPLE
TO
SHILOH.

BEING

The Substance of several SERMONS,
preached at Sacramental Occasions, upon
Genesis xlix. 10. in the Year 1725.

By Mr. RALPH ERSKINE, Minister of the Gospel at
DUNFERMLINE.

Isaiah xliii. 5, 6.

*I will bring thy Seed from the East, and gather thee
from the West. I will say to the North, Give up;
and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my Sons
from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of the
Earth.*

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in the Lucken-booths; And by John Meldrum in
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THE

Happy Congress

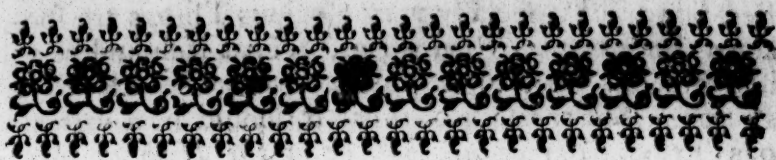


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The first Three SERMONS,
at *Kinglassie*, at a Sacrament-
Occasion; June 6th, 1725.

Gen. xlix. 10.

*The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet,
until Shiloh come; and unto him shall
the Gathering of the People be.*



THE Twelve Sons of *Jacob* were very remarkable in their Day: But the Twelve Tribes of *Israel*, that were descended and denominate from them, were yet more remarkable and renowned; for we find their Names upon the Twelve Gates of the New Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 12.* In the View hereof, their dying Father *Jacob* says some Things remarkable concerning each Son and his Tribe. Holy *Jacob*, the nearer he was to his Death, the nearer to God; his Soul had not only a Kind of Divinity, but of Divination also, whereby he prophesies of what shall take Place concerning them, and come to pass in the latter Days. From *Jacob's* Couch, and Deathbed-prophecy, we may learn some new Lessons, tho' it be an old Story, and spoken more than Three thousand Years ago. Very great Things are said to and of the several Sons

of *Jacob*, when now they were gathered together at his Bed-side : But especially very glorious Things are spoken of *Judah* and his Tribe ; as, 1. That it should be an honourable Tribe, *v. 8. Judah, thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise.* 2. That it should be a victorious Tribe, *Thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies.* 3. That it should be a superior Tribe to the rest, *Thy Father's Children shall bow down before thee.* 4. That it should be a powerful and courageous Tribe, *v. 9. Judah is a Lion's Whelp.* 5. That it should be a Royal Tribe, from which *Messias* the Prince shall come, *v. 10. The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, &c.* As *Abraham* saw *Christ's Day* afar off, so did *Jacob* here : Tho' his bodily Eyes were dim, yet such a clear-sighted Soul hath he, that he sees that which the Eye of Mortality never saw, even an Object at such a far Distance, that he spake clearly of it more than Sixteen hundred Years before the Accomplishment thereof, and while there was nothing but Shadows that intervened betwixt the Prophecy and the Event. And, notwithstanding all the legal intervening Shadows, and that his Sun was going down in his Hemisphere of Nature, his Eyes dim through Infirmary of Age ; yet his Mind being irradiated by the Spirit of God, he sees the Sun of Righteousness, the bright Morning-Star, the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, the Light of the *Gentiles*, and the Glory of his People *Israel*. As *Moses* from the Mount beheld the Land of *Canaan* afar off ; so *Jacob* from the Mount of his Divine Contemplation, even when his Heart and Eye-strings are breaking, sees to the furthest End and Period of all the Prophets. This Text is the more remarkable, that it is the third Promise of Grace and of *Christ* to Mankind-sinners after the Fall. The first Promise was, *Gen. iii. The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent.* The second was, *Gen. xxii. where God says to Abraham, In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* But this is the third, and fuller and plainer than the former two ; for these shew that it shall be, but this shews

shews *when* it shall be, pointing out the very Nick of Time when Christ shall come : So that, if any One demand, When shall this *Shiloh* come ? when shall this Messias be revealed ? The Answer is, When the Sceptre is departed from *Judah*.

This Text hath two Parts : The first pertaining to the Jews, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, till Shiloh come* : The second pertaining to the Gentiles, *To him shall the Gathering of the People be*. He shall come to the Jews, and be received by the Gentiles : For Christ the King of the Jews came to them ; *He came to his own, and his own received him not*. The Gentiles shall be subject to the King of the Jews, and at last the Jews shall be subject to the King of the Gentiles. The former Part of the Verse speaks forth the Conviction of the Jews, the latter Part the Conversion of the Gentiles.

Now, in the first Part of the Words, relating to the *Jews*, you may notice Two Things, 1st, a Sign ; and, 2^{dly}, an Event. The Sign is the Departing of the Sceptre from *Judah*, and the Government. The Event is the Coming of Christ the *Shiloh*. (1.) You have the Sign ; and this Sign, if it be not doubled, it is at least twice mentioned in the Text, for the same may be understood by the Sceptre, and the Lawgiver ; where there is a Sceptre, there must be a Legillator. They may be either considered to be the same, namely, the Sceptre, or the Lawgiver ; or separately, as some read it, the Sceptre of the Lawgiver, making the one the Principality, and the other the Magistracy, as it were, at the Feet of the former, as *Paul* at the Feet of *Gamaliel*. *Jacob* here foresaw, that the Sceptre and Government would come to the Tribe of *Judah*, which was fulfilled in *David*, on whose Family the Crown was intailed. He foresaw also, that the Sceptre would continue in that Tribe, at least a Government of their own, till the Coming of the *Messias*, in whom, as the King of *Zion*, and Great High-Priest, it was fit, that both the Priest-
hood

hood, and the Royalty, should terminate and centre. I know it is objected here, especially by the *Jews*, who deny that the *Messias* is come, That in the Captivity of *Babylon*, where was the Sceptre of *Judah*? And that the *Maccabees* were of the Tribe of *Levi*; Where then was the Tribe of *Judah*? For clearing of this, you are to remember, that when the Sceptre entred upon *Judah*, it remained there. You may see, *Judg.* i. 1, 2. *That after the Death of Joshua, the Children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them? The Lord answered, Judah shall go up, because I have delivered the Land into his Hand.* But when it is said, The Sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, it is not meant the Sceptre shall still remain there in the same Splendour and Glory: It is not taken away, when it pleases God to eclipse the Glory, and obscure the Splendour of it, as a Punishment of their Sins. Now, as until the Captivity, all along from *David's* Time, the Sceptre was in *Judah*, so in their Captivity they had their Princes Exiles. You see the King of *Babylon* lifting up the Head of *Jeboiakim* King of *Judah*, when he was his Captive, and advancing him above the other Kings that were with him in *Babylon*, *2 Kings* last Chap. at the Close. And after the Captivity, their Rulers were either by the Father or Mother's Side, descended from the Tribe of *Judah*. They had still a Governor of that Tribe, or of the *Levites*, that adhered to it, which was equivalent, till *Judah* became a Province of the *Roman Empire*, just at the Time of our Saviour's Birth, and was at that Time taxed, as one of the Provinces of that Empire, *Luke* ii. 1. And tho' the Act of Government might, at some Time or other, cease, yet the Right of Government was still in *Judah*; the Crown still did belong to *Judah*, and the Principality had its Denomination from *Judah*; and to this Day, they have the Name of *Jews* from *Judah*, and will ever be so called; the Name shall not wear out, till Christ's second Coming: However, his first Coming did not take Place, till the Sceptre was departed

ed from *Judab*: And when the Government was actually departing, or departed from *Judab*, that was the Time when Christ came into the World; for when *Herod*, a Stranger, and of another Nation, was made King, and Governor of *Judab*, and thereby the Sceptre and Royal Power departed from *Judab*, our Lord appeared on Earth. Therefore, in the Narrative of Christ's Nativity, *Mat. ii, 1. 2.* it is particularly recorded, That he was born in the Days of *Herod* the King, namely, when this notable Prophecy of the Patriarch *Jacob* was fulfilled. The *Jews* then may hold their Peace, and be silent, otherwise we can condemn them out of their own Mouths; for, at the Time of Christ's Death, they expressly owned, saying, We have no King but *Cesar*, *John xix. 15.* no King but the *Roman* Emperor: And now, the Sceptre, that was removed from *Judab* before this Time by Conquest, is departed from them by Consent. Now, they solemnly own, that the Right of Government was fallen into the Hands of the Emperor, and so departed from *Judab* to *Cesar*, from *Judea* to *Rome*. The Sceptre is here publicly resigned: We have no King but *Cesar*; a plain Indication, that the Time for the *Messias* to appear, even the set Time, was now come; for if the *Jews* had then no King but *Cesar*, then the Sceptre was departed from *Judab*, and the Lawgiver from between his Feet: Hence our Lord Jesus, by their own Confession, is he that should come, and we are to look for no other, for he came exactly at the Time appointed. Now, from that Time, to this very Day, they have had no King, no Magistracy, no Governor among themselves: Their Tribes are confounded, they are Vagabonds in the Earth, without any Rule or Government at all. This Sign of the Coming of *Shiloh* cannot now take Place among them: This may confirm our Faith of his being come, and condemn their Unbelief, who obstinately deny it, tho' they cannot but acknowledge, that the Sceptre hath ceased from *Judab* 1700 Years ago. So much ament the Sign.

Secondly, The Event is the Coming of *Shiloh*. In the Question now be, Where is this *Messias*, in our Text? Here it is said, Until *Shiloh* come. But what is this to the Sign? Where is any Mention made of the *Messias*? It is universally received, that this *Shiloh* is Christ: But the Question is, How *Shiloh* may signify and be called Christ? The Imposition of the Name does agree with the Nature of the Person, and his Work; and from diverse Roots proceed diverse Reasons of this Name: As the Lines drawn in a Circle may be many, yet all agree in one Centre; So, among all the diverse Opinions about the Signification of the Word *Shiloh*, yet all agree that it is the *Messias* who is here meant. I shall lay before you some of the Significations of the Word. *1st*, Some notice, that *Shiloh* signifies Peace, Prosperity, and Happiness: Now, Christ is the Prince of Peace, he preserves against the Gates of Hell, Sin, and Death; and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hand, and they only are happy that are found in him. *2dly*, Some make it to signify Rest: Christ is indeed the true Resting-place for weary Souls, *Mat. xi. 28. &c.* *3dly*, Some notice, that *Shiloh* signifies a *Repositum*, a Thing laid up in a Store: And this agrees to him, who is the Desire of all Nations, kept up in the Store-house of God, until the fit Time in which he might come abroad, and appear. In the Fulness of Time, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman. And so, *4thly*, Some observe, that *Shiloh* signifies *Filius ejus*, his Son; that is, the Son of *Judab*, or the Son of *David*: But a certain Author puts *ejus* in the *Femenine Gender*, her Son, that is, the Son of the Virgin: And so, in both these Series, Christ is the Son of *David*, the Son of the Virgin, the Seed of the Woman. *5thly*, To this Purpose is the Observation of these that make *Shiloh* to signify the *Membrane*, that is, the Skin that wraps the Infant in the Mother's Womb; Christ, according to the Flesh, was the Son of the Womb, even of the Virgin's Womb. *6thly*, And more especially, *Shiloh* signifies Sent; and Christ

Christ is indeed the Sent of God, and the best Present that ever God sent, *John* iv. 7. A Man that was blind was bid go and wash in *Siloam*, which is, by Interpretation, *Sent*, to heal, not bodily Diseases only, but Soul Diseases. As God said to *Moses* in the Mount, Get thee down, and visit thy Brethren, that commit Sin below; so God said to Christ, Go down, and visit thy Brethren, which are below in Sin, and in the Shadow of Death: How frequently is he therefore called the Sent of God. Whatever of these Meanings you put upon the Word, they are all significant, and shew, that *Shiloh* agrees to the Person of Christ; and put them all together, they make his Name to be as Ointment poured forth, that fills the whole World with a sweet Savour. He is the King of *Zion*, to whom the Sceptre belongs; for the Sceptre was not to depart from *Judah*, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, till *Shiloh* came: And thus you have the Portion of *Judah*, or that Part of the Words that belongs to the *Jews*.

Now, the second Part of the Words is what relates to us, *To him shall the Gathering of the People be*. Here is a happy Confluence, and Concourse of Persons prophesied of; where you may notice, (1.) The Place of their Resort, *to him*. (2.) The Manner of their resorting to him, there will be a *Gathering to him*. (3.) The Persons resorting, or the Members of the Meeting or Assembly; it is a *Gathering of the People*. (4.) The Certainty of this Event, *to him shall the Gathering of the People be*. Notice then, I say, 1. The Place of their Resort, or to what Centre of Rest their Motion will tend; even to him, that is, *to Shiloh* the promised *Messias*; to him, who is the Son of God, the Sent of God; to him, as the only Temple, the only Shelter and Saviour; to him, who is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*; to him, on whom the Sceptre is devolved. 2. The Manner of their resorting, *To him shall the Gathering be*. I find this Word in the Original *Hebrew*, to be such as gives Occasion to render it thus, *To him shall the Expectation of the People be*,
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or thus, To him shall the Obedience of the People be ; but our own Translation being most excellent and agreeable to the Original, I shall especially hold by it, yet so, as not to exclude the other Significations; for they agree upon the Matter, and declare the Manner of this Resort of the People to Christ, That it is not a simple Assembling to him, or an outward Gathering, like a confused Multitude, not knowing wherefore they meet together ; but that Christ shall be so the Desire of the People, the Hope of the People ; that it is not only a Gathering of Bodies, but a Gathering of Souls, and a Gathering of Hearts unto *Shiloh*. They shall not only lend him an outward Ear, but an inward Heart-obedience ; not a Gathering of external Attendance upon him and his Ordinances only, but a Gathering also of spiritual Attendance and Dependence on him, Complacency in him, and Reverence towards him. In a Word, this is such a Gathering here, as imports all the Acts of Faith and Hope in him, and all the Outgoings of the Soul after him in the Exercise of Grace internally, as well as in the Performance of Duty externally. 3. You have here the Persons thus resorting or assembling unto *Shiloh*, namely, the People ; To him shall the Gathering of the People be, that is, the Gentiles ; for the blessed *Shiloh* was to break down the Partition-wall betwixt them and the Jews. The Promise here respects even the Gentile Nations. It is not a particular Sett of People that is here intended; it is People in the plural Number ! All our *Latine* Commentators translate it either *Aggregatio Gentium*, or *Aggregatio Populorum* ; *Junius* and *Tremellius*, *Obedientia Populorum*. The Coming of *Shiloh* was to turn the singular Number to the plural ; He was to turn *Gens* to *Gentes*, and *Populus* to *Populi* ; that is to say, (for I design not to speak to you in an unknown Tongue) He was to turn a Nation in particular, to Nations in general ; and, instead of making a Feast only for one Sort of People, to wit, the Jews, he was to make unto all People a Feast of fat Things, and Wines on the Lees, *Ila*, xxv. 6. yea, he was to turn

out

out the Jews, and take in the Gentiles in their Room for so many Hundreds of Years. And alas! they have been turned to the Door these Seventeen hundred Years bygone, and we need to pray that the Time of their Rejection may be of no longer Continuance; for it will not fare the worse with us, that they be received in again. Nay, *If the Casting away of them*, says the Apostle, *Rom. xi. 15. be the Reconciling of the Gentile World, what shall the Receiving of them be, but Life from the Dead?* However, at present they, that that were the only Church, are unchurched, they are cut off from *Shiloh*, and there's a Gathering of the People in their Room: What People? Even the People that were afar off, the Gentiles; for the Jews had been long the People near to him: They were the Children of *Abraham*, and we the Stones; and Glory to Him, that out of these Stones can raise up Children to *Abraham*. They were the Garden of God, when we were a desolate Wilderness. The Gentiles were contemned by the Jews; the *Levite-Priest* would scarce look upon a poor *Samaritan*, but pass by on the other Side. We were the Dogs that were without, and looked upon by them as a cursed People, as indeed we were: But now, by the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, the Curse is turned to a Blessing; the Gentiles are invited, and the Jews neglected. Where Nature made a Separation, Grace makes a Gathering and Conjunction; where Sin made a Disjunction, Grace makes an Aggregation: *To him shall the Aggregation or Gathering of the People be.* 4. You have here the Certainty of this Event; *To him shall the Gathering of the People be.* God revealed this Counsel of his to old *Jacob*; and he, by the Inspiration of God, declares it, that it *shall* be. It is very true, the *shall* be in the Text here is not in the Original, but it is very fitly supplied by our Translators; and the Certainty of this Event is as strongly asserted, when these two Words are left out, as when they are put in, and in my Opinion somewhat stronger: For, if you read the Text without supplying of these two Words, then it runs,

thus, *The Sceptre shall not, &c. till Shiloh come, and the Gathering of the People to him.* And this Way of reading the Text says, I think, four Things; (1.) That the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, is a certain Evidence that the Sceptre is departed from *Judah*; for the Sceptre was not to depart from them, till *Shiloh* should come, and gather the People to him. Now, the Sceptre is departed from *Judah*; therefore *Shiloh* is come, and the Gathering of the People is to him. (2.) That the Coming of *Shiloh*, and the Gathering of the People to him, was of equal Certainty by the Counsel of Heaven: The Gathering of the People to Christ was as certainly foreseen, as it was certainly foreseen that he was to come; and that, according to the Counsel of God, the Gathering of the People hath been and shall be to Christ, is as sure and certain, as it is sure that he is come already; for thus they stand connected, namely, the Coming of the *Shiloh*, and the Gathering of the People to him. (3.) It says, That the Coming of *Shiloh*, and Gathering of the People to him, was to take Place together; and indeed the Gathering of the Gentiles took its remarkable Accomplishment with his Coming. Whenever he was born in *Bethlehem*, behold there came Wise-men from the East, enquiring after him: We are sure they were *Gentiles*, and belonged not to the Common-wealth of *Israel*; and the Respect they paid to Christ the King of the *Jews*, was a happy Prefage of what would follow, when these that were afar off should be made nigh by Christ. It is true, they were Magicians; but some take it in a good Sense, for the *Magi* among the *Persians* were their Philosophers and their Priests: But tho' we take it in the worst Sense, it was an early Instance of Christ's Victory over the Devil; whatever Sort of Wise men they were before, now they begin to be Wise men indeed, when they set themselves to enquire after Christ. In this there were some early Trophies erected of Christ's Victory over Satan's Territories, abstract from the Gentiles that were religious Profelytes of old; herein commenced the Gathering

of the People to him. (4.) This Reading says, That as, upon the Coming of *Shiloh*, the Gathering of the People should be no more delayed; so, upon his Coming, their Gathering should be no more discontinued, but that the Gathering of the People should continue and run parallel with the Period wherein it can be said that now *Shiloh* is come. The Text speaks of a twofold Period: The first is the Time before Christ's Coming, wherein it could be said, *Shiloh* is not come; and, so long as that could be said, the Sceptre was to remain with *Judab*. The second is the Time of Christ's Coming, and after it, wherein it can be said, That *Shiloh* is now come, and the Gathering of the People to him; therefore, so long as that Period remains, so long must the Gathering be. In a Word, this Reading of the Words imports, that while the Scene is now so far altered, that it can be said, The Sceptre is departed from *Judab*, which will be to the End of the World; so long we have Ground to expect that the Gathering of the People shall be to *Shiloh*, who is now come. The Sceptre is departed from the Jews, and the Saviour is come to the Gentiles: Whatever Way we read it then, it stands established for a firm Certainty, that to *Shiloh* shall the Gathering of the People be. Now, omitting many Observations that might be drawn from the Words, I confine myself to that which especially concerns our selves, namely,

OBSERV. *That it is established in the Council of Heaven concerning Jesus Christ the Messiah, that to him shall the Gathering of the People be.*

Now, that this is established in the Council of Heaven, is plain from the sacred Records of that Council, which you have in your Hand. I need not cite all the Scriptures that speak of the Conversion of the Nations to him; I'll but name two or three, *Psal.* ii. 8. where God is declaring the Decree concerning our Mes-

Messias : He says to him, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, &c.* Ask of me, what shall I give thee in Consideration of that noble Undertaking of thine, which I am so well pleased with, and so much glorified by? Why, might Christ say, all that I ask is, that I may have a Seed to serve and glorify thee and me, my Friends among yonder lost Heathen Pagan World ; Let me see in them, as well as in others, the Travel of my Soul, and be satisfied. Well, says the Father, it is granted ; *I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth, &c.* See *Isa. xi. 10, 12. Isa. lvi. 8. & lx. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.* and the Beginning of *ver. 9.*

Method. 1. To offer some Remarks with respect to the Nature of this Gathering, and the Qualities of it. 2. Who are the People of whom it is said this Gathering shall be. 3. To whom this Gathering of the People shall be, and in what Respect it is to Christ. 4. The Manner of this Gathering, by what Means, and in what Method it shall be. 5. When are the special Times and Seasons wherein this Gathering to Christ does or shall take place. 6. Why this Gathering shall be to him ; why the People, and why to *Shiloh*. And then shut up all with some Inferences from the whole.

FIRST HEAD.

The *First* Thing proposed, was, To offer some Remarks with respect to the Nature of this Gathering, especially these Four. You may remark, 1st, That there are several Sorts of Gatherings that we would distinguish. There is an outward corporeal Gathering, and an inward spiritual Gathering ; outward Gatherings are not here especially intended. It is true, that a Flocking to Ordinances is very pleasant, as it was to the Psalmist, when he said, *I was glad when they said, Come let us go up to the House of the Lord* ; and when that Word is accomplished, *Isa. ii. 3. Many People shall go and say, Come let us go up to the Mount of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob* ;

and he will teach us his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths. But many gather about a Tent, and gather together to Ordinances, that never are gathered to *Spilob*. Some, like the *Athenians*, gather to Ordinances, to hear if the Minister will tell them any News; some, like the Pharisees, watch for a Word to carp at, and play the Devil in accusing of the Brethren; some, like the Jews, seek after the Law and legal Duties, that they may establish their own Righteousness; some, like the *Greeks*, seek after Wisdom and Eloquence, and Flowers of Rhetorick; some gather only to gaze, and others to muse, and perhaps they muse upon their Market, their Journey, their Dinner, their Supper, their Diversion, and may be the Sermon is done before ever they know well where they are; some gather to hear, but so soon as the Minister begins, they fall asleep, as tho' they had been brought in for dead Corpses, and the Minister were preaching their Funeral-sermon; some gather to Ordinances and hear, but they hear and scorn, they hear and mock, they hear and despise. May we not say with Christ, *What went ye out to the Wilderness for to see?* rather than, *What went ye out to hear?* For People remember that which they see, but they forget all that they hear; which says, that they came rather to see than to hear. Some indeed will mind what they think to the Minister's Reproach, or what will afford Matter for their own Diversion; but, with respect to the Main, they depart from Sermons with their Hearts like a bottomless Purse that can hold no Money, and so they go home without gathering any Fruits that fall from the Tree of Life, which should be the great Design of their gathering together. Nay, as Satan pointed *Adam* to another Tree, lest he should go to the Tree of Life; so he points them to some other Business, and to some other Exercise and Study: Hence they go home, saying, The Minister hath not an edifying Gift; says another, I cannot profit by him; says a third, He does not keep his Text; says a fourth, He preached too long, and I cannot mind all; as if the Ground should complain of the

the Seed, which yet will not receive the Seed. Few gather to Ordinances, or attend upon the Word, as the Star that should lead them to Christ, as the Ladder that should mount them to Heaven, as the Manna that should refresh their Souls. Many Gatherings of the People consist only in presenting their Bodies like dead Carcasses before the Lord; *They worship God with their Mouth, and honour him with their Lips, but their Heart is far removed from him.* The special Gathering here intended, is an inward and spiritual Gathering; the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, is the Gathering of Souls to Christ, a Gathering of Hearts, a Gathering of Affections to him. An outward Gathering, like bodily Exercise, profits little, where there is no spiritual Gathering and holy Approach to a God in Christ; and it is a Pity, where there is a great Congregation of People, that there should be but a small Aggregation to Christ, while the Soul comes not along with the Body to his Ordinances. O that only is a blessed Gathering, when God gathers Souls to himself, and Christ gathers Hearts to himself! *Psal. lxxv. 4. Blessed is the Man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts: We shall be satisfied with the Goodness of thy House, even of thy holy Temple.* And indeed there will be no Gathering to *Shiloh* here, if God himself do not cause us to approach. Hence, as you're to distinguish betwixt a corporal and spiritual Gathering, that you may not think it enough when you bring only your Bodies before the Lord, while yet you leave your Hearts behind you, and the Desire of your Soul is not to his Name; so you're to distinguish betwixt a passive and active Gathering: As a Bodily-gathering is unprofitable, where there is no Soul-gathering; so an active Gathering to *Shiloh* is impossible without a passive Gathering. That there shall be an active Gathering to Christ, is as certain as the firm Decree of Heaven, *John vi. 37. All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*; but it is as certain, that there can be no active without a passive Gather-

ing, v. 44. *No Man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.* Both these are express'd by the Spouse in one Word, *Draw me, we will run after thee.* The passive Gathering is God's Drawing Sinners to Christ, the active Gathering is their Running to him when drawn. This is such a necessary Distinction, that it must be taken along with the Whole of our Discourse upon this Subject; wherein we must consider this Gathering sometimes in an active, and sometimes in a passive Sense, because the one cannot be without the other. When irresistible Power is put forth, there must be a Gathering, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power;* and where there is such a Gathering, it is a Fruit of that Exerting of Divine Power in its irresistible Efficacy. Hence I offer a

2d Remark, That in this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, there are certain Gatherers employed. The great and glorious Gatherer is God himself, when he draws Sinners to himself with the Cords of Love and Bands of a Man, that is, in a powerful, irresistible Manner; and yet not violenting the Will, as *Arminians* dream, but with loving and rational Arguments, conquering, carrying, captivating, and overpowering the whole Soul. God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, are employed in this Gathering-work; It is done by the Care of the Father, by the Pains of the Son, and by the Power of the holy Ghost; It is done by the Motion of the Father, by the Moyen of the Son, and by the Might of the eternal Spirit. God the Father is the Gatherer, *Eph. i. 10.* He is said to gather into one all Things by Christ. Christ himself, to whom the Gathering is, is also the Gatherer, *John xi. 52.* where it is said of him, That he would gather together into one the Children of God that were scattered abroad. And that the holy Ghost is the immediate Gatherer, is plain, in that as the Father sends the Son to gather, so the Son sends the Spirit to gather the People to him: Hence the Spirit is said to reveal Christ, to testify of Christ, to glorify Christ, to invite

vite the People to Christ, *Rev. xxii. 17. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come*: And he not only says it externally to the Ear by his Word, but internally to the Soul by his common Motions, and efficaciously to the Heart by his irresistible Operation; like that Word by which the World was made, when God said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; so, when the Spirit says, *Let there be Faith, there is Faith*. Hence, he that is called *the Spirit of Faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. is also *the Spirit of Power*, 2 Tim. i. 7. For he both begins and carries on the Work of Faith with Power, and so powerfully draws Sinners to Christ, and effectually gathers the People to *Shiloh*. The principal Gatherers then are the blessed Persons of the glorious Trinity: The Father does it, thro' the Son, by the holy Ghost. This adorable Three in One work to each Other's Hand. There are subordinate Gatherers, which God does employ; particularly Ministers of the Gospel, whose greatest Work lies in winning Souls, and gathering People to Christ, therefore called *Workers together with God*. 2 Cor. vi. 1. Their main Business is to sound the Trumpet, and gather the People to *Shiloh*; They are to preach Christ, to proclaim Christ, to offer Christ, to invite Sinners to Christ, and that is all they can do: They may cast down the Gospel-net, but they will catch nothing, unless the Lord himself gather in the Fish; *Except the Lord build the City, the Builders build in vain*. The Gospel is then the Power of God to Salvation, that is, his Organical Power, the Instrument of his Power, when it is the Ministration of the Spirit; *Not by Strength, nor by Might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord*. Seek then, that his Power may accompany the Word, otherwise it will not be a gathering Word. Now, as Ministers are the subordinate Gatherers under Heaven's Influence by Office; so may private Christians, whose Souls are gathered to Christ: They may be Gatherers in their Station, not indeed by Office ministerially and authoritatively, but by private Admonition and Counsel charitatively. Thus Parents, by their Precept and

Exam-

Example, may be the Instruments of gathering their Children to Christ, Masters their Servants, and private Christians their Neighbours: And happy these that thro' Grace are thus employed, whether as Ministers or Christians! for they are wise; *He that winneth Souls, is wise. And they that be wise* (Dan. xii. 3.) or, as it may be read, they that be Teachers, *shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* But then again,

The 3^d Remark I offer is, That there are certain Airths from whence the Gathering of the People is made. Whence are they gathered, may you say? Why, this is to be considered both in Point of Place, and in Point of State. *First*, In Point of Place. Whence is the Gathering to *Shiloh*, and from what Airth? Why, even from every Airth, *Luke xiii. 29. They shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God.* This Gathering to *Shiloh*, considered even literally and extensively, will be from all the four Airths, and from all the four Corners of the Earth, from *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.* Hence it is said of Christ's Dominion, *Psal. lxxii. 8. that he shall have it from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth;* and not only the large Continent, but the little Isles are included, *v. 10, 11. The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring Presents, and the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer Gifts: Tea, all Kings shall fall down before him, and all Nations shall serve him.* You have all the four Airths mentioned, *Isa. xliii. 5, 6. I will bring thy Seed from the East, and gather thee from the West; and will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of the Earth.* When the Isles and Ends of the Earth are so much mentioned, even the outmost Ends of the Earth, to be Christ's Possession; we may therein see and wonder at the Grace of God, that in his Counsel of old, concerning the Gathering of the

People to *Shiloh*, he had a View to our far away Northern Isles among the rest, even *Britain* and *Ireland*, *Scotland* and *Zetland*. When God will count the People that were gathered to *Shiloh*, it will be said even of poor remote *Scotland*, *This Man and that Man was born there*; and O that the Number were increased, and a greater Gathering-time would come than ever hath been! O for a gathering Power, a Day of Power! However, it is from all Airths that the Gathering of the People shall be to Christ: It is not confined to one Place; To him shall the Gathering be, from *Asia* in the East, and from *America* in the West, from *Africa* in the South, and from *Europe* in the North, not forgetting the *European* Isles in the Midst of the Northern Seas. Secondly, In Point of State. Whence is the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, and from what Airth, from what State and Condition are they to be gathered? Here let me allude to the four Elements, Water, Fire, Earth, and Air, out of which they are gathered. 1st, Some are gathered as it were out of the Water, and fish'd out of the Flood; and hence, as Ministers in gathering Souls are called Fishers of Men, and the Gospel the Fish-net cast into the Sea for gathering of every Kind, *Matth. xiii. 47.* so they are gathered out of the Sea of a troublesome tempestuous World, out of the Water and Floods of Sin and Misery, where they are swimming. When the Lord gathers People to himself, he must fish them, and gather them out of many Waters and great Depths, even out of the Depth of Security, out of the Depth of Sensuality, where they were swimming pleasantly, yet dangerously, ready to swim in to the dead Sea of everlasting Destruction. Nothing but the Hand of God could reach to the Bottom of the Depth whence the Lord does gather his Elect. 2^{dly}, Some are gathered as it were out of the Fire, *Zeck. iii. 2.* *Is not this a Brand plucked out of the Fire?* There is a Fire of Lust and Lewdness that some are burning in; *For Wickedness burns as the Fire.* *Ila. ix. 18.* and to be gathered out of the Torrid Zone, and brought

brought to a temperate Climate, is a great Matter. Out of this Fire they must be gathered, that are gathered unto *Shiloh*. There is the Fire of God's Wrath, which is a consuming Fire, wherein they are in utmost Danger of being consumed for ever; but when the Lord gathers the People, he puts his Hand as it were into the Midst of the Fire, and plucks them as Brands out of the Burning. 3dly, Again, They are gathered out of the Earth, out of the Dust and Dung of the Earth. Some are groveling on the Earth, and licking the Dust like Serpents, having their Hearts and Affections clogged with the Clay, in Respect of their Worldliness, Earthiness, Covetousness, while the Heart is so set upon earthly Things, that they are lost, and hid among the Clay, and covered with the Dust; and from thence they must be gathered, *Isa. lvii. 17, 18. For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, &c. I have seen his Ways, and will heal him, and lead him also.* O the Kindness of God, in gathering Souls out of such a Pickle! Yea, some are not only covered with the Dust, but lying among the Dung of this Earth, sticking in the miry Clay, and wallowing in all the gross Abominations and Pollutions of the World, such as these mentioned, *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.* yet out the very Dung does he gather the People to *Shiloh*; Such were some of you, but ye are washed, &c. He gathers his Sheep out of the most dirty Mire. Let none presume, for he is Sovereign, and lets some stick and perish in the Mire; Let none despair, for he is merciful, and draws out some from the very Dung. When *Antigonus* a King pass by a Ditch, into which a Sheep was fallen, the Historian says, he pulled it out, tho' foul and dirty, with his own Hand; for which he was exceedingly beloved, and commended by his Subjects. But behold, the King of *Israel* is yet kinder: He not only stoops to filthy Ditches of Sin, into which his Sheep are fallen, and gathers them with his Arm, but lays them in his Bosom, *Isa. xl. 11.* that he may warm them with his Heart-Love, and wash them with his Heart-Blood. 4thly, Again, they are

are gathered out of the Air, in a Manner ; while the Prince of the Power of the Air is flying away with them, they are gathered out of his Claws. Some that are Satan's Captives, they are flying in the Air, as it were, with the Wings of Pride and Vanity, exalting themselves above all that is called God. They learn of *Lucifer* to be proud and lofty, looking down upon others, as if they were the Dregs and Offscourings of the Earth : When God gathers any such, he hath them to bring down from lofty Elements, and airy Vanities, that he may humble them under his mighty Hand, and make them stoop to *Shiloh*. Others are, as it were, building Castles in the Air : Such are these, who being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, will not submit to the Righteousness of God, *Rom. x. 3*. This is a high and lofty Building ; but it is like a Castle in the Air, having no Foundation, but the high and airy Imagination of these that build it ; which the Lord will bring down, when he gathers them out of their Heights and Altitudes, as you see he does, *2 Cor. x. 5*. *The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the Pulling down of strong Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high Thing, that exalts itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.* There you see high Things, high Thoughts, high Imaginations, all high and airy Buildings exalted against Christ, and his Righteousness ; yea, strong Holds, such as nothing but the the mighty Power of God can pull down : Such are all the false Hopes, and legal Dreams of poor Sinners. They hope they will mend, before they die ; They'll turn a new Leaf, and live a new Life, and so pay their own Debt, and do their own Business themselves : Thus they build in the Air a Refuge of Lies, which the Hail must sweep away. And indeed God raises a Storm in the Air, that he may gather his Remnant from thence : As in a dangerous Storm, the Mariner will cast Silk and Sattin over Board, and the most valuable Things

Things, rather than perish; even so God raises a Storm of Conviction in the Man's Conscience, that threatens everlasting Shipwreck, that he may cast away his carnal Confidence, and legal Righteousness; that what Things were Gain to him, these he may count Loss for Christ. Thus, I say, there are some Airths from whence they are gathered: And this leads me to another Remark,

Fourthly, That there are several Things supposed, and imported in this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. To mention some of these, *1st*, It supposes Straying, and imports Conversion. It supposes Straying; and indeed the natural State is a straying and wandering State. The Man is wandering away from God, wandering from his Commandments, wandering in a Wilderness, wandering he knows not where away, for the Devil hoodwinks him; The God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not: And so they wander in the Dark, in the Darkness of Ignorance, Unbelief, Error, Delusion, and Confusion; and yet, in the Darkness of deep Security, never imagining but that they are in the right enough Way, tho' it be the Way to Hell, thinking that God is altogether like unto themselves, and approves their Way, and allows them in all these Things, wherein they allow themselves. Hence it is impossible to bring them off from their carnal Thoughts, and wicked Ways, where they are wandering, unless God himself gather them by his converting Grace. This Gathering imports Conversion, wherein God says with Power (as he made the World with an omnipotent Power) *LET IT BE*, so here) *Let the Wicked forsake his Way*, Isa. lv. 7, 8. *And the Unrighteous Man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord*. But this Power of God, whereby he converts Sinners, rides in the Chariot of Grace, saying, as it follows, *I'll have Mercy on him, I will abundantly pardon*. And here the Cord of Love and Mercy, with which he draws. The Gospel of Grace is the Power of God to Salvation, the Power of God to Conversion; without

thout the Faith and Apprehension of this Mercy there is no Gospel-repenting, nor Return, no effectual Conversion; *Let him return, for I will abundantly pardon.* There is the Motive, which must be viewed, before any can be moved thereby. But when this Mercy of God in Christ, in multiplying Pardon where Sin hath been multiplied, is once viewed, the Soul is melted and moved. What, is there Mercy for the like of me, Pardon for the like of me, and abundant Pardon, where Sin hath so abounded? Will I, for great Sins, get great Pardons, and for a Multitude of Sins, a Multitude of Pardons? Will the Mountains of Mercy overtop and cover all the Mountains of my Sins? O, says God this, even wicked me? This makes all my Bowels melt, and all my Bones to say, Who is like unto the Lord? Thus he gathers in Conversion, saying, Wicked Man, return, for I will abundantly pardon: And O that is a powerful FOR; like a Loadstone, that hath a drawing Vertue upon the hard Steel, so will this draw the hard Heart, and dissolve it. This For is backed with another, *For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, nor my Ways your Ways*; q. d. With Respect to the profane Sinner, do you think that I am altogether like unto your self, and that I approve of your Ways, as they were my Ways, and your Thoughts, as if they were my Thoughts? Because you allow your self that Way, you think I allow you also; and your Thought is, that you shall have Peace, tho' you wait after the Imagination of your own Heart: Nay, my Thoughts are not your Thoughts. Or, with Respect to the self-righteous Sinner, what are your Thoughts? You think that your Way is a very good Way, and so that it is God's Way: And you think that God will accept of you, because you say you do your best, and do as well as you can, and no Body can say black of your Eye; you are a good Neighbour, you are honest in your Dealings: And so you think you are every Way right; and that God thinks as well of you, as you do of your self; and that his Thoughts are your Thoughts.

Thoughts, and that your Way that you are walking in is his Way : Nay, nay, says he, My Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither my Ways your Ways ; for as the Heavens are above the Earth, so are my Thoughts and Ways above your Thoughts and Ways. O do not measure God's Thoughts and Ways by your sinful or selfish Thoughts and Ways : If you would not run into a Mistake, Man, Woman, look to the Clouds, and see how far they are above the Earth ; yea, look to the Heavens, and see how far they are above the Clouds ; yea, look to the God that made the Heavens, and see how far he is exalted above the Heavens : And if the Heavens be so far above you, that you cannot reach them, or measure them, O how far is God above you, that you should attempt to measure his Thoughts and Ways by yours ! Or, again, with Respect to the humbled Sinner, that is like to be moved and melted with the View of Mercy, but yet is tempted to doubt and deny it, saying, O my Thoughts are, that God will never have Mercy on the like of me, such a God provoking Sinner ; and I fear God's Thoughts are the same with mine : Nay, My Thoughts are not your Thoughts, says God ; look to the Heavens Man, look to the Heavens Woman, look to the Heavens Lass, look to the Heavens Lad ; for as the Heavens are above the Earth, so are my Ways of Grace, and Thoughts of Mercy, above your Thoughts and Ways : Your Thoughts are, that I have no Way to shew Mercy on you ; and therefore, that my Thoughts are to ruine and destroy you : But I have found a Ransom, through which my Mercy does make Way and Vent to the Credit of Justice ; therefore my Thoughts are Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil. Judge not my Thoughts then by the Standard of yours, but rather make the Height of the Heavens above the Earth to be the Standard, whereby to judge of the Height of my Mercy, for overtopping all your Sins with abundant Pardon ; therefore turn : Here is the *For*, the *threefold For* or Motive, upon which Turning or Conversion is

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urged. This Gathering, I say, supposes Straying, and imports Conversion.

2dly, It supposes Scattering, and imports Convention, *John xi. 52.* It is a Gathering together into one the Children of God that were scattered Abroad. The natural State is a scattered State; and God's Remnant, whom he hath amind to gather, are not only scattered here and there through the Earth, but before the Lord gather them, they are like dead and dry Bones scattered about the Grave's Mouth, *Psal. cxli. 7.* They are dead in Trespases and Sins, dead spiritually, under the Power of Sin; dead legally, under the Sentence of Death and Damnation; and not only dead Bones, but dry Bones, no Sap of Grace or Goodness in them: And not only so, but scattered Bones; How shall these dry Bones live, or these scattered Bones be gathered together? You see this represented, *Ezek. xxxvii.* The Spirit of Life must come, and gather together the Bones, and make them live; and then, and not till then, are the scattered Souls conveyed, and gathered to Christ. Then the scattered Thoughts, that were scattered among the Stuff of the World, are gathered to Christ, every Thought being brought in Captivity to the Obedience of Christ. Then the scattered Affections, that were lost among the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, are gathered and conveyed together unto Christ, as the proper Centre. O then, there is a Convention of Hearts, that were scattered among other Objects, *My Son, give me thy Heart.* Then there is a Convention of Desires, to him that is the Desire of all Nations; a Convention of Delights, to him who is the Delight of God and Angels. Instead of the Desires of the Flesh, and the Delights of Sense, the Desire of their Souls comes to be towards him, and the Remembrance of his Name, saying, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?* &c. O, are there not here dead and dry Bones scattered about the Mouth of the Grave, dead and dry Hearts and Affections scattered about the Mouth of Hell? O, What Need of a Gathering?

3dly,

3dly, It supposes Rejection, and imports Reception. The natural State is a State, wherein the Man is rejected of God, forsaken of God; he hath forsaken God, and God hath forsaken him. But when God gathers the People to *Shiloh*, he receives them into Favour, *Isa liv. 7. For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercy will I gather thee; that is, I will love thee freely, and receive thee graciously.*

4thly, It supposes Separation, and imports Union. The natural State is a State of Separation from God, wherein the Man is like the Prodigal in a far Country, far from God, and far from Christ, and far from Grace; Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the Word, *Eph. ii. 12.* There is an infinite moral Distance, as well as natural, betwixt God and them. The Wall of Separation is such, as none but God can pull down; which he must do, when he gathers the People to *Shiloh*: And hence, in gathering Sinners, he not only preaches Peace to them that are afar off, but, in Christ Jesus, they that were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ; They that were separate from God, and without a Head, since the first *Adam* fell, are gathered together to God, under a new Head, the second *Adam*, and unite to him. *Eph. i. 10.* It is called, A Gathering together into one, all Things in Christ. They are thus unite to God, and One among themselves in Christ. This Union is by the Bond of the Holy Spirit, and Instrumentality of Saving-Faith: And the gathered Soul becomes one Building with Christ, whereof Christ is the Foundation; one Temple, one Body, one Spirit; *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.*

5thly, It supposes Rebellion, and imports Subjection, Reconciliation, and Obedience. The natural State is a State of Rebellion, Alienation and Enmity: Before People are gathered to *Shiloh*, they are gathered under the Standard of the Devil, and carrying on a Rebellion against Heaven; every Man and Woman is a Rebel. The carnal Mind is Enmity

against God : Every Thought of every Man is a Rebel against God ; every Imagination of the Thought of the Heart is evil, and evil continually. Now, when God gathers People, he brings them into Subjection to his Son ; as they are unite to him as their Head, so they are subject to him as their King. This Subjection and Obedience is imported in the Original Word, as I told in the Explication. The gathered People are brought to say, Other Lords besides Thee have had Dominion over us : But now, by Thee only will we make Mention of thy Name ; as the *Jews* said, We have no King but *Cesar*, so they are brought to say, We have no King but *Shiloh*, no Lord but the Lord Jesus. Rebellion is turned to Subjection and Obedience, and their Alienation to Amity and Love.

In a Word, *6thly*, It supposes an Amission or Losing, and imports Restoration and Recovery. The natural State is a lost State : We are lost in the Rubbish of the Fall of *Adam* ; we are lost privately, in that we are not what we were, in a State of Innocence and Uprightness, nor in a State of Friendship and Fellowship with God, nor in a State of Power, Strength and Ability to do God's Will ; we have forfeit all this by our Sin and Fall, *Rom. iii. 23. All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.* We are lost positively, in that we are that which we should not be, even filthy Sinners, and guilty Criminals : Filthy, and so are Children of Disobedience, *Eph. ii. 3.* Guilty, and so are called Children of Wrath, *Eph. ii. 3.* Our Bodies and all their Members are corrupted, which is called the Filthiness of the Flesh ; our Souls and all their Faculties are corrupted, this is the Filthiness of the Spirit : Being filthy and guilty Sinners, we are positively lost. We are lost judicially, as being under a Sentence of Death, and under the Curse of the Law, *Gal. iii. 10.* The Law saith, *The Soul that sinneth shall die.* We are lost meritoriously, in that our Sins deserve Death, which is the Wages of Sin, *Rom. vi. last.* And no Wonder ; for it is a Violation of God's holy, just, and good Law, *Rom.*

li. 12. It is a Contrariety and Contradiction to God's holy, just and good Nature, *Hab. i. 13.* In a Word, we are lost in Point of Power and Ability to save and recover our selves, lost as to all Capacity in the Creature to help us: We are by Nature without Strength, *Rom. v. 6.* We are not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be, *Rom. viii. 7.* We cannot know or discern the Things of God, yea, they are Foolishness to the natural Man, *1 Cor. ii. 14.* far less can we by any Atonement satisfy God for our Offences, therefore *the Redemption of the Soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever:* Thus we are every Way lost.

Now, as this is the lost State supposed, so this Gathering of lost Souls imports the Son of Man his Coming to seek and save that which was lost, *Luke xix. 10.* While yet the Sinner is stout-hearted, and far from Righteousness, unwilling to be saved and gathered, like these, *Mat. xxiii. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, but ye would not!* He makes Enquiry after them by his Word, by his Rod, by his Spirit, saying as to *Adam*, when he made Enquiry after him, *Adam*, where art thou? Man, Woman, where art thou hiding thy self? I am come to seek, and save, and gather you. And as he seeks them out by his Word, so he finds them out by his Spirit, and restores them to a State of Salvation. Thus he gathers them preparatively by the Law, formally and immediately by the Gospel, meritoriously by his Blood, procuratively by his Intercession, occasionally by his Providence, and effectually by his Spirit; drawing them with his Grace, covering them with his Righteousness, quickning, sanctifying and sealing them to the Day of Redemption. But how he gathers, may come to be more particularly shown upon the Fourth Head. Only so much for the Remarks I promised anent the Nature and Import of this Gathering.

SECOND

SECOND HEAD.

The *Second* general Head proposed, was, To shew who are the People of whom it is said, The Gathering of the People shall be to him. Why, in general, by the People you're to understand the *Gentiles*, *Rom. xv. 11.* and therefore here is a Door of Faith open to us, to gather in by it unto *Shiloh*: For the Promise is to us, whose Forefathers were as black and blinded *Pagans* as any in the World; To us is the Word of this Salvation sent, that the Gathering of the People shall be to *Shiloh*. And here is Encouragement to us to gather in to him by Faith; here is a Foundation of Faith for all the People that hear this Gospel; God says, The Gathering of the People shall be to Christ the Messias, insomuch that whoever of all the People shall be perswaded to gather in under his Wings, they shall be welcomed to him, and saved by him. Why, says One, It may be I'm none of the People here meant, none of the Elect that shall be effectually gathered; and therefore my Attempting to come to him may be vain. In Answer hereunto, you would consider, that there are two distinct Questions here, namely, 1. Whom he designs in his Decree? 2. Whom he defines in his Word to be the Persons that shall gather? And we would consider which of these especially is proposed in the Gospel for our Encouragement in gathering unto *Shiloh*. As to the *First*, Whom he designs in his Decree to be gathered? These are indeed the Elect, who are said to be chosen in Christ before the Foundation of the World, *Eph. i. 4.* They are said to be predestinate; and *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, *Rom. viii. 30.* They are said to be given to Christ; and, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, *John vi. 37.* and, *All that are ordained to eternal Life, shall believe*, *Acts xiii. 48.* The Election shall obtain, *Rom. xi. 7.* And indeed, if God had not in his eternal Purpose designed to gather some, none at all would be gathered. Now, I think it is observable, that in all these Places, where

God's

God's Design of gathering the Elect to him is mentioned, it is readily brought in either as an Encouragement to them that are gathered, that they may have the Comfort of their Election from Eternity ; or as an Encouragement to Ministers that are Gatherers, that they may know their Labour shall not be without Success; or else as a Check and a Blow to these that are final Rejecters of Christ, and refuse to be gathered to him: But never is it brought in for a Discouragement to any People in the World to gather unto *Shiloh*; hence, to the *Jews*, that obstinately and finally rejected Christ, he says, *John vi. 36, 37.* Ye will not come; but know to your Confusion, that all that the Father hath given me, shall come. But, that none may be hereupon discouraged, he says, Whosoever comes, he will in nowise cast out: Where, as he shuts the Door upon final Rejecters, so he opens the Door to all Comers, that they may flock in to him; and the rather because it is impossible they can know their Election of God, till once they come and gather to Christ. It is Devilish Reasoning therefore to say, I know not if I be an Elect, and therefore I need not come to Christ; for it is Divine Reasoning rather to say, I know not my Election, therefore I'll come to him that I may know it, since it cannot possibly be known otherways. Election in Christ, *Eph. i. 4.* *We are chosen in him*; and therefore out of Christ it cannot be seen. But, if I be not elected, say you, I will not get Grace to come. Indeed if you have no Will to come, you have no Grace to come; and if you have no Will to come, whom can you blame for your Enmity but your selves, that will not come to Christ? Will you complain you have not Grace to come, and yet reject the Gospel of Grace, that only can make you willing? O then, *Why will you die, O House of Israel?* But, Sir, Is it not true, that all will not be gathered, and therefore may not me? Well, but is it not as true, that many shall be gathered, and therefore why not you? Is there any

any irritant Clause in the Gospel, excluding you from gathering to *Shiloh* among the rest? Non-Election can be no Hinderance to you, if a lying Devil and deceitful Heart do not make it so; for it is a Secret you are not concerned with: It is a secret Thing that belongs to God, *Deut. xxix. 29.* Your Business is, to notice what belongs to you, namely, what Warrant you have from the Word for you Gathering unto *Shiloh*. When the Gospel-Call is among your Hands, it belongs not to you to demur upon that Question, *Whom he designs in his Decree?* But it belongs to you to answer to your Name in the 2d Question, namely, *Whom he defines in his Word to be the Persons that should gather, and shall be gathered, to Shiloh?* And that all may press themselves in upon him, without Fear of Presuming when they are gathering to him, they are defined by the most general Terms, namely, *The People, To him shall the gathering of the People be.* And that none may have any Reason to think that they are cast out, but that all and every one may be encouraged to venture their perishing Souls upon Christ, I shall shew what Sort of People are here meant,

(1.) It is a Gathering of Pagan People and Heathens that is here meant, *Shiloh shall come, and the Gathering of the People to him;* accordingly when Christ came, that the Gentiles might be gathered and might glorify God for his Mercy; he came to the *Jews* for the Good of the *Gentiles*, see *Rom. xv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.* And now, for accomplishing of these Promises, he allows us to preach among you Gentiles *the unspeakable Riches of Christ.* This is a part of the Mystery of Godliness, Christ preached among the Gentiles, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* It was a Mystery to the Jews and primitive Christians, when Christ was first preached among the Gentiles, *Rom. xi. 17, 18.* Why the Gentiles were the Uncircumcision, they were abominable Outcasts, whose very entering into the Temple was enough to pollute it. They were *Strangers and Aliens*: But now God declares in the Gospel

That he will justify the Uncircumcision thro' Faith, *Rom. iii. 30.* And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith, preached the Gospel before to *Abraham*, saying, *In thee shall all Nations be blessed, Gal. iii. 18.* The Gentiles here meant were called Dogs, and the Jews were called the Children; hence said Christ to the Woman of *Canaan*, when trying her, *It is not meet to take the Childrens Bread, and cast it to Dogs. Without are Dogs, Rev. xxii. 15.* but such Dogs have been gathered, *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. Such were some of you, &c.* Thus the People that may and shall be gathered are defined, they are Gentiles, Uncircumcised, Heathens, Dogs; and if that be a Description of you, Man, Woman; then the Promise concerns you, and you're called to embrace it with Application.

(2.) It is a *Gathering* of graceless and ungodly People that is here meant. Tho' he makes them Gracious and Godly when once he hath gathered them; yet, before they be gathered, and while he is seeking to gather them to himself, they are Graceless and Ungodly, *Mark ii. 17. I came not to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance:* And indeed if he would except Sinners, he would except all Mankind, and call none at all, for all have sinned; therefore say not, you're a Sinner, and therefore cannot be of that Number to whom this Word of Grace belongs; for if you be a sinful Creature of *Adam's* Family, we are charged to hold out the Word of Salvation to you, *Go preach the Gospel to every Creature, Mark xvi. 15.*

(3.) It is a *Gathering* of the most sinful People that ever were, that's here meant. Christ (say you) may gather Sinners, but none so gross as me: Therefore I tell you, that even the grossest of Sinners are included in this *Gathering*; hence the stout-hearted People are encouraged to come to him, *Isa. xlvi. 12, 13. Hearken, ye stout-hearted, and far from Righteousness, I bring near, &c.* Hearken to his Reasoning, *Isa. i. 18. Tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, &c.* Why says he thus, but that the greatest and most

guilty Sinner may not be *discouraged* from *gathering* about the Throne of infinite Grace? Hence neither the cruel Massacres and cursed Sorcery of *Manasseh*, nor the Blasphemy and Persecution of *Paul*, did exclude them from *obtaining Mercy* and being *gathered* to *Shiloh*; yea, the *Jews* that murdered the Lord of Glory, see them both called and converted, *Acts* ii.41.

(4.) It is a *Gathering* of diseased People that is here meant, *Mark* ii. 17. When *Shiloh* comes, it is to *gather* the Sick and Diseased about him for healing them, *They that be whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick*: Multitudes *gathered* about him to touch him, and, as many as touched him, were made whole. All that are sick are called to come to him, and all that want the Physician. We need not understand it of these that are sensibly sick and see their Need, such only will indeed come; but it is true without a Figure, *That all that are really sick, and stand in need of a Physician, ought to come*. Now, what is your Disease, Man, Woman? for the Physician is come here to *gather* all diseased Folk about his Hand, that he may get the Glory of healing them. Is Darkness and Ignorance your Disease? Behold, *Shiloh* is come to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*. Is Deadness your Disease? Behold, *He is come to give Life, and to give it more abundantly*. Is Blindness your Disease? *He is come to open the Eyes of the Blind*. Is Hardness of Heart your Disease? *He is come to take away the Heart of Stone, and give the Heart of Flesh*. Whatever be the Disease, let the *Gathering* of diseased People be to him. If your Disease be Unbelief, so as you cannot for your Life elicit one Act of Faith, He hath the Spirit of Faith to give for curing that. If your Disease be Impenitency, so as you cannot repent of one Sin, He hath the Spirit of Repentance to give for curing of that. If your Disease be Enmity and Hatred against God and Christ, He hath the Spirit of Love to give for curing that. If your Disease be Carnality, so as your Thoughts and Affections are carnal and fleshly, He hath the Spirit

of Holiness to give for curing that. If your Disease be Weakness, that you cannot think, you cannot act, you cannot pray, He hath the Spirit of Power to give for curing that. If your Disease be Error and Delusion, as well as Dimness and Confusion, He hath the Spirit of Truth to give, to lead you into all Truth. If your Disease be Security, fearing nothing, but sleeping in the Arms of the Devil, destitute of all Grace, filled with all Atheism and Blasphemy, and such Unconcernedness and Indifference, that no Arguments in the World can awaken you; Behold, *Shiloh* is come, who is the Resurrection and the Life, having the Spirit of all Grace to give, *Isa. xlii. 1. Behold my Servant, &c. I have put my Spirit upon him, &c.* There is one Disease, called the unpardonable Sin, which the Man that is under would never so much as wish to be cured of, abstracting from that, I know no Disease excluded out of the Mediator's Commission. Whatever be the Disease then, of which you would wish and need to be cured, if you be among the Number of diseased People, that is the People of which the *Gathering* must be to *Shiloh*.

(5.) It is a Gathering of distracted People and mad Fools. This is set forth in the Parable of the Prodigal, who played the Fool and Mad-man, till he came to himself, and came home to his Father, who, notwithstanding of his former Madness and Folly, kindly received and entertained him, *Luke xv. from v. 17.* What is all the People in the World but a Company of mad Fools, and beside themselves, feeding upon Swines Husks, sensual Pleasures, and lying Vanities? yet of such People is the Gathering to *Shiloh*. Therefore, O Sinner, do not exclude your self from the Benefits of this Promise, tho' you have been carrying like One that hath been out of his Wits all your Days. Some in the World are called Wits, and think themselves so, who yet are mad and out of their Wits, so long as they do not think of gathering to *Shiloh, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and who of God is made unto us Wisdom.*

(6.) It is a Gathering of imprisoned People that is here meant; for *Shiloh* is come to proclaim *Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound*, Isa. lxi. 1. Now, what Sort of a Prison are you in, Man? This Word of Salvation is to you. *Turn ye to your strong Hold, ye Prisoners of Hope*, Zech. ix. 12. The People, that are to be gathered to *Shiloh*, are designed *Prisoners*; and if *Prisoner* be your Name and Designation, be it never such a deep, dark and dreadful Prison, here is a Door of Hope for you. Is your Prison-door barr'd and bolted, so as no Man nor Angel can open? Behold, he proclaims *the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound*. When he in the Gospel-proclamation is saying, *Open Prison-doors, open, open*; O take hold of his Strength, and invite his Power to be put forth, and you shall find all the Bars shall be broken to Pieces. To give him Employment to open your Prison, is one of the Ways of gathering to him. Do you look upon your self as a Prisoner in the furthest Nook, hidden in the deepest and darkest Hole of the Prison? Behold the gathering Hand of him that can save to the uttermost, can reach to the furthest Nook of the Prison, and bring you forth, so as your Name shall be called *Sought out*, and *Found out*, Isa. lxii. 1st. But, on this Subject, see my Notes on Isa. xlii. 6. Now, if the People to be gathered to *Shiloh* be of that Sort, if it be a Gathering of Pagans to make them Christians, a Gathering of graceless People to make them gracious, a Gathering of great Sinners to make them great Saints, a Gathering of diseased People that they may be made whole, a Gathering of Fools and Mad-men that they may be made wise, a Gathering of Prisoners that they may be made free; if this be the Designation of these People of whom the Gathering shall be to *Shiloh*, O then, is your Name and Designation touched at here? what hinders but you put in for a Share of this gathering Grace? By what Clause are you excluded, if you be one of the People here mentioned, Man, Woman? And why will you exclude your selves from coming

coming to Christ? The Gospel excludes you not, for it names you in a Manner; and you should answer to your Name, saying, Lord, here I am: I find I'm mentioned among these of whom the Gathering shall be to *Shiloh*; therefore, behold I come to him, let my Soul and all its Faculties be centred on him.

But, in case you think that I have mis'd your Name, I must tell you, that all that are called by the Gospel of Christ are allowed to gather under his Wings, and it is by the free universal Call given to all the People to whom the Gospel comes: It is by this, that God gathers all his Chosen in to Christ; and the Promise, given forth indefinitely to all the People, is a Ground of Encouragement to them all to come to *shiloh* by Faith: Therefore says the Apostle to them whom he was calling to come to Christ, whom they had crucified, *Acts ii. 39. The Promise is to you and to your Children, and to all them that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* And here, as all that are afar off are called, so more particularly there are two Sorts of People called, that some do not dream to be so, namely, 1. They that exclude themselves. 2. They that are excluded by Men, they are included in the Call.

1st, They that exclude themselves; and you'll find, they are most particularly called, who are most ready to exclude themselves. They that are weary and heavy laden, under a Sense of Sin, and Apprehension of God's Wrath, are ready to exclude themselves; therefore they are particularly called, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you Rest*, *Matth. xi. 28.* I do not confine the Sense of these Words indeed to the Humbled and Convinced; for I think that even these that are wearying themselves in pursuing Vanities, and living contentedly under a heavy Load of Sin or Guilt, or wearying themselves with a Load of legal and unprofitable Service, are called also by that Text to come to Christ, in whom alone they can find that Rest and Satisfaction which they are vainly seeking in other Things. Now, tho' I judge it would straiten

straiten the Gospel-call there, to confine it only to the first Sense ; yet I reckon the first to be so much imported, that seeing such Persons as find a Load of Sin and Wrath upon them, are readiest to exclude themselves, therefore they are expressly called. Thus again, they that see themselves destitute of all good Qualifications, having no Money nor Money-worth, nothing but Poverty, and Want and Worthlessness ; these are ready to exclude themselves, as being broken and lost ; therefore they are particularly encouraged, as *Ezek. xxxiv. 16.* Again,

2dly, They that are excluded by Men ; yea, whom Ministers are ready to exclude, yet the Call reaches them. Men are ready to exclude from the Call of the Gospel, such as refuse the Call, and pour Contempt upon it, *viz.* Mockers and Scorners ; yet we find such are called, *Prov. i. 22, 23.* Men are ready to exclude from the Call of the Gospel, or the Invitation to come, and gather unto *Shiloh*, such as are not sensible of their Want of him, and think themselves happy enough without him. Men exclude unsensible Sinners, that have no thirsty Desire after Christ, but are satisfying themselves with other Things : Yet these are particularly called, as you may see, in these Two Passages, *Isa. lv. 1, 2.* *Ho, every one that thirsteth, &c.* Now, you may notice, that the Thirsting here is no desirable Quality, it was a Thirsting for that which did not satisfy, and a Labouring for that which was not Bread ; and yet they are invited to come to him, as to One that hath a Variety of Supply, Water to refresh, Wine to cherish, Milk to nourish ; and all offered freely, without Money, and without Price : So that here, even these that are thirsting after their Lusts, and after the World, and unsatisfying Vanities, are called. See also, *Rev. iii. 18.* *I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayest be rich, white Raiment, &c.* But who are they that are thus called ? Even these, that, in the preceeding Verse, said they were rich, and increased with Goods, and stood in Need of nothing ; even these that had no Sense

Sense of their Need of Christ: True, these that do not see their Need will not come; but whether they see it or not, they are called and obliged to come. Now, Men are ready to exclude from the Call these that are unhumbl'd, unsensible Sinners, that are not convinced of their Sin and Misery; but because God's free and gracious Call can effectually work upon unsensible, stupid, brutish Sinners, as well as upon the Objects that we reckon most prepared; therefore Sinners Want of Sense, and due Conviction, is brought in as a Reason why they are called to come to Christ: *I counsel thee to buy of me tried Gold, white Raiment, Eye-salve;* why, Because thou sayest, *I am rich;* &c. and knowest not that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Let none think then, because they do not see their wretched and undone State without Christ, therefore they are not concerned with this Call: Nay, therefore you are concerned, says the Spirit of God; and you may object what you will, but you will not get it put by you. Shift this Call as you will, it will rise up in Judgment against you, if you do not answer it. If you are an unsensible Sinner, not knowing that you are poor and miserable, thinking that you are rich enough already, and does not see that you are wretched, blind and naked, you have the more Need to come to Christ, that he may give you Eye-Salve, that you may see your Misery without him, and your Remedy in him. Thus we are warranted to open the Mouth of the Gospel-Net: And I hope, by this Time you may see, that you are all concerned with this Call. And, what do you think we intend by this universal Call? Why, there is One of Two Things will follow; either, to the Glory of God's Justice we get you all left inexcusable; or, to the Glory of his Mercy, we get you all gathered in to Christ; and if there be some of both Sorts, then both these Ends are reached. But, O to see the last especially, even a *Happy Gathering of the People to Shiloh!* Thus you see who are the People, of whom it is said, the Gathering shall be to the *Messias*. None
are

are excluded, all are invited, and warranted to assemble to him; and when God says, *To him shall the Gathering of the People be*, all the People should say *Amen*.

THIRD HEAD.

The *Third* Thing proposed, was, To shew to whom shall the Gathering of the People be; or, what is the gathering Place, and where is the Gathering to be. Here we may inquire, *1st*, What Place there is in Christ for the People to gather to? *2dly*, In what Respect the Gathering of the People is to him?

First, What Place there is in Christ for the People to gather unto? Christ is the Temple to which we ought to resort; he is the only Refuge and Sanctuary of poor miserable Souls, and there is Room enough in this Temple and Sanctuary for all that shall gather in to it. In general, the very Person of Christ is the gathering Place, the meeting Place, to which People should gather: They that come to Christ, are to close with his Person, and they are interested in all his Purchase; hence the many Calls to come to him, to receive him, to rest on him, to trust in him, to flee to him, and so to God in him; for a God in Christ is the Throne of Grace, to which the Gathering of the People should be, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly, &c.* More particularly there is a sixfold Place or Chamber in the Lord Jesus that I shall mention, for the gathering of the People into. (1.) There is the Chamber of his Righteousness. No Doubt this is one of the Chambers spoken of Song i. 4. *The King hath brought me into his Chambers* and Isa. xxvi. 20. *Come, my People, enter into your Chambers, and hide yourself, till the Indignation be overpast*. Indeed there is no escaping of divine Wrath and Indignation, but by gathering in to this Chamber of Christ's Righteousness. It is one of the most splendid and well adorned Chambers that ever was; for it is hung with the red and white Hangings which God himself wrought; I mean, with the scarlet and white Obedience, and the red bloody Suffering

and Satisfaction of the Son of God, guilty Sinners cannot be saved, without a Law-fulfilling, Justice-satisfying Righteousness: But when they gather in to this Chamber, they are absolutely safe, and may say, *Surely in the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. *The Lord is well pleased, for his Righteousness Sake*; insomuch, that none can lay any Thing to their Charge, Rom. viii. 33. They may laugh at all Challenges, while they shut their Chamber-Door upon themselves: They are then chambred, like *Noah* in the Ark, which was pitched within and without, Gen. vi. 14. so as no Drop of Water could come in, so here. (2.) There is the Chamber of his *Name*, for the Gathering of the People into, Prov. xviii. 10. *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, to which the Righteous run, and are safe*. He is the Strength, as well as the Righteousness of *Israel*; and to this Chamber, in which there is everlasting Strength, we ought to throng. Many a Closet there is in this Chamber: If we should mention all his Titles, all his Offices, all his Relations, all his divine Attributes and Perfections, which belong to his Name, there would be no End of telling; but every one of them, and any one of them, is a fit Place for gathering to: Every Corner of this Chamber is perfumed, insomuch, that none are gathered into it, but they are ravished with the sweet Smell thereof, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointment, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth*: His Name is *Christ the Anointed*, and every Name he hath is an anointed Name; He is an anointed Jesus; an anointed Surety, an anointed King: And when any of his Names are cleared up, and opened, it is like the Opening of a Box of Ointment; it is like the Opening of a Chamber-Door, full of all ravishing Perfumes. (3.) There is the Chamber of his *Bosom*, for the Gathering of the People unto, Isa. xl. 11. He gathers them with his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom, his kind and merciful Bosom and Bowels, which yern towards Sinners, Jer. xxxi. 20. This is a large Chamber, *Jam. i. 11. The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy*.

ty; the Original is *Πολυσπλάγχνος*, He is of large Bowels, or full of Bowels; there is Place enough in these Bowels of infinite Mercy for Sinners to gather in into; and this Chamber of his Bosom is standing open for all Comers. The Chamber-Door of his Heart is open, that the Gathering of the People may be in to it; and as it is a large Chamber, that can contain you all, being as broad and wide as the infinite Mercy of a God in Christ, so it is a warm Chamber: O it is a warm and heartsom Chamber, to get in to the Heart and Bosom of Christ. They that gather in there, will sit at the warm Fireside of God's Love and Grace in Christ; their Hearts are warmed, and made to burn within them, *Luke xxiv. 32. Did not our Hearts burn within us, when he talked with us by the Way, and opened to us the Scriptures?* While he was opening the Scripture, he was stirring up the Fire; they were in the Chamber of his warm Heart and Bosom, and it made them to have a warm Heart too; surely, Believer, you know what a sweet Chamber that is.

(4.) There is the Chamber of his *Fulness*, to which the Gathering of the People should be. This is a Chamber, that comprehends all the rest of the Chambers within it; but because it is so notable and glorious, we name it among the rest. It is the best furnish'd Chamber that ever you heard tell of, for all the Fulness of the Godhead is in it. It pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell, *Col. i. 19, & ii. 9, 10. In him dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him.* To this Chamber should all poor Beggar and Dyvour Sinners, that have lost their Stock in the first *Adam*, gather together, that out of his Fulness they may receive Grace for Grace, *John i. 16.* In this Chamber are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, all the Treasures of Grace and Glory, all the Treasures of God's Perfections, and all the Treasures of the Spirit's Graces: Your great Want is the Want of God; and you may find him in this Chamber: Your next Want is the Want of Grace; and whatever Grace you want, be it

Faith,

Faith, Repentance, Love, or whatever else, it is lying treasured up in this Chamber: If you want Pardon, Purity, Happineſs, Holineſs, all the Stock of Riches that you can imagine, to make you up for ever and ever, is treasured up in this Chamber; and behold the Chamber-Door is open to you all, while we preach among you Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt: Let every Soul here be like Beggars gathering about this Door. (5.) There is the Chamber of his *Covenant*, to which the Gathering of the People ſhould be; when God gathers People into it, he is ſaid to ſhew them his Covenant, *Pſal. xxv. 14.* and in ſhewing his Covenant, he ſhews ſome divine Secrets to them. When the People gather in to this Chamber, they are ſaid to take Hold of his Covenant, *Iſa. lvi. 4, 6.* This Chamber is remarkable, for the Wells that are in the Miſt of it. There is both a Well for waſhing, and a Well for drinking; and both are open, that the People may gather together to them. The Well for waſhing is the Blood of the Covenant; and that is the Fountain open for Sin and for Uncleanneſs, *Zech. xiii. 1.* It is juſt the boundleſs bottomleſs Sea of the Redeemer's Blood, which cleanses from all Sin: This Fountain is open, that all guilty filthy polluted People may gather to it, and be waſhen. The Well for drinking is not only that ſame Blood of Chriſt, which is Drink indeed, but all the Bleſſings of the Covenant, and all the Promiſes of the Covenant; to all or every one of which, People ſhould gather, and draw Water out of theſe Wells of Salvation with Joy, *Iſa. xii. 3.* Here is the Well of Water ſpringing up to everlaſting Life, *John iv. 14.* and all the People are invited to gather to it; Whoſoever will, let him come, and take of the Water of Life freely, *Rev. xxii. 17.* In this Chamber there is the beſt of Cheer, Bread enough, and to ſpare, all ſpiritual Bleſſings of heavenly Places in Chriſt Jeſus; and this Chamber, and all the Cheer that is in it, whereof Chriſt himſelf is the All, it is dedicate of God for the Uſe of the People, that their Gathering may be to it, *Iſa. xlii. 6.* I'll give thee for a Covenant

of the People. (6.) There is the Chamber of his Palace, for the Gathering of the People into: By his Palace, I mean, his Church; and by his Church, I mean, both his Church militant on Earth, and triumphant in Heaven.

As for the Church Militant, that is the Palace of the great King, *Psal. xlv. 15.* there he desires to dwell, *Psal. lxxviii. 16.* It is his House, where he would have the Gathering of the People to be; therefore he calls it *a House of Prayer for all People, Isa. lvi. 7,* and all are to flee unto it, *Isa. ii. 2.* The Ordinances and Provisions of Christ's House are in a peculiar Manner for the Entertainment of the People, and the Stewards of the House have a special Commission to invite all Sorts of Sinners, even these that have played the Prodigal and the Fool in the Way of Sin, to come in to it, *Prov. ix. 3. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: As for him that hath no Understanding, Wisdom says to him, Come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled. Luke xiv. 21. Go quickly* (says the Master of the House) *to the Streets, and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the Poor, the Blind, the Maimed and the Halt; yea, go to the High-ways, v. 23. and Hedges, and compel them to come in, that my House may be filled.* It is a Pity indeed that ever the People should be discouraged from gathering in to the Lord's House, while the Provisions of the House are mixed with unwholesom Food of corrupt or erroneous Doctrine; while the Stewards of the House do turn it to a Den of Thieves and Robbers, robbing the People of their Christian Privileges; and while the Servants of the House do fall by the Ears, and begin to smite their Fellow-servants, because the Lord of the House is away, and delays his Coming; while, in a Word, the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the House is out of Order, and in great Confusion, not garnish'd like the Palace of the great King. This indeed is Matter of Lamentation, and will be so, till the King of Zion the Master of the House himself come by the Power of his Spirit,

spirit, and set Matters right: And, as the Prophet says, *Hag. ii. 7. I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come*; so, before the Lord comes in a glorious Manner to his House, we have Reason to expect he will give the House a terrible Shake, and make it tremble. But in the mean Time, let not the Disorders of the House hinder the Gathering of the People to it; for at best the lower Chambers of our King's Palace will never be so clean as the upper Chamber in the higher House. The Church militant will never be in a State of Perfection here; only study you to keep ay the cleanest and best Side of the House, like sick People betaking themselves to the purest Air. But withal, let never your Gathering to his House or Ordinances content you, without the Presence of the Master of the House, and the Lord of Ordinances, so as you may have it to say, that not only you *was brought to the Banqueting-house*, but also, *his Banner over you was Love*.

As to the Church triumphant, that is his glorious Palace, his higher House, of which Christ says, *John 14. 2. In my Father's House there are many Mansions*; thither all that have been gathered graciously, will be gathered gloriously, *with Gladness and Rejoicing will they be brought, and shall enter into the King's Palace*, *Psal. 45. 15. This is, by Way of Eminency, the Ivory Palace*, where all his *Garments smell of Aloes, Myrrhe and Cassia*; where the People gathered to him, *will be like him; for they shall see him as he is*: Where they will be for ever with him, *in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand Pleasures for evermore*: As he that drinks of the Ocean, tho' his Thirst be never so great and insatiable, yet leaves it as full and flowing as ever; so these that drink of the Ocean of these heavenly Pleasures, will find the Fulness of Joy never ebbing, but ever flowing thro' all Eternity. Christ himself will be the Heaven of Heaven, and the very Temple, wherein the happy People will be gathered together, *Rev. 21. 22. I saw no Temple there; But the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb*

Lamb are the Temple of it. If the Lamb be the Temple there, then the gathering of the People there must be to him. Thus you see, what Place there is in Christ, and what Chambers for the gathering of the People to.

The *second* Question, upon this Head, was, to show in what Respect the gathering of the People is to him, or in what Capacity. The Scripture is very copious, and elegant in setting forth the various Respects, where in this gathering of the People to *Shiloh* may take Place; and that, for conveying a due Apprehension thereof to our Souls, it is set forth by what takes Place, sometimes among rational Creatures, among Sensitives, among Vegetables, and among inanimate Things; and it is not for Nought, that the Scripture is so copious this Way, that our Faith may have Room and Liberty to act upon Christ, in whatever Respect he is represented.

1st. From Rationals; while we view Political or Oeconomical Affairs among Men, or whatever Station or Relation they are said to be in, or Actions they are said to perform, by these we will find this Matter represented unto us. Hence our gathering to *Shiloh* is like the gathering of Scholars to a Teacher, or of Disciples to a Master, that we may be taught of him; and he is therefore called the Non-such Teacher, *Job* 36. 22. *Who teacheth like him?* Man's teaching reacheth the Ear, but his teaching reacheth the Heart: Man's teaching may work upon the Capacity where it is, but his teaching can work a Capacity where it is not. O let all the People gather to his School, who is the great Prophet, &c. Again, it is like a gathering of pursued Malefactors to a Refuge: It is a *Flying for Refuge to the Hope set before us*, *Heb.* 6. 18. To gather to him, is to say by Faith, with *David*, I flee to thee to hide me, to hide with thy Wings, with thy Blood, with thy Righteousness, from the Wrath of God, and from the Curse of the Law. Again, it is like the gathering of Rebels to a Sovereign, casting down their Arms, and owning him to be their only lawful King and Liege-Lord;

Lord : Gathered Souls put the Crown upon King Je-
 sus his Head, saying, *Other Lords have had Domini-*
on over us ; but now, O let the King of Glory come in !
Psal. 24. 7. Let him reign, &c. It is like the ga-
 thering of Wanderers to the right Way Home. *I am*
the Way, says Christ. It is like the gathering of wea-
 ry Travellers to an Inn, or weary Labourers to a rest-
 ing Place : *Come to me, all ye that are weary, and I*
will give you Rest. It is a gathering of Guests to a
 Feast, *Matth. 22. 10.* and of Strangers to their
 Home, that *they may be no more Strangers and Foreign-*
ers, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the
Household of God, Eph. 2. 19. Before a Man come to
 Christ, he is Abroad in a far Country ; but when-
 ever he comes to Christ, he is at Home. It is a ga-
 thering of Children to a Father, to be *pitied as a Fa-*
ther pities his Children, Psal. 103. 13. It is a gather-
 ing of Brethren to their elder Brother, as *Joseph's*
Brethren did to their younger, that they might be
 supplied by him, and live upon him. It is a gather-
 ing of Beggars to a Store-house, that they may be
 enriched ; Of Captives to a Redeemer, that they may
 be liberate ; of Debtors to a Surety, that they may
 be ransomed ; *Be Surety for thy Servant for Good ;* of
 Lepers to a Laver, that they may be cleansed ; *Purge*
me with Hyssop, &c. It is a gathering, as broken
 Merchants, to a free Market : What a gathering of
 People will be to a Fair or Market ? but they are not
 all Buyers that come to Markets, far less that come
 to the Market of Ordinances ; however the Market is
 free, we may *buy without Money and without Price.*
 The Wares are precious, *tried Gold, white Raiment,*
Eye-salve, and the Pearl of great Price. All Things
 are Nothing to this Pearl ; and therefore, when we sell
 our All to buy this Pearl, yet we get it for Nothing.
 Right gathering to Christ, is to come to his Market,
 and take all his Wares for Nothing. It is a gathering
 of Members to an Head ; *for he is the Head of the*
Body, the Church, Col. 1. 18. From the Head is de-
 livered to the Body all the Light, Life, Beauty, Mo-
 nor,

tion, Sympathy, Protection, Provision, Supply of Good, and Prevention of Evil. It is a gathering of fugitive Servants to their Masters; of Clients to an Advocate to plead their Cause. It is a gathering of drowning Men to an Ark, to save their Lives; and a gathering of Patients to a Physician, to heal their Diseases. Lord, says the gathered Soul, my Disease is mortal and incurable; I'll die of this Disease, if thou dost not heal me. Well, says Christ, this Sickness is not unto Death; I can cure the Disease of Death it self, spiritual Death. Lord, says another, my Disease is a lingering Disease, it is an Halt and Lameness, that I cannot so much as come to the Physician for Healing, and I am like to go halting no the Grave, under a certain Sore, that no Body knows of. Is that your Disease, Woman? mind that Word, *Mic. 4. 6. I will heal her that halteth*; and be encouraged still to be about the Physician's Hands.

2dly, From Sensitives, this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is represented in Scripture in the following Respects. This Gathering to *Shiloh* is like the Gathering of Sheep to a Shepherd, *1 Pet. 2. last. Ye were as Sheep without a Shepherd, but now are ye returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls. Other Sheep I have, that are not of this Fold*, says Christ; *they also I must bring*. He must gather them, and they must be gathered, according to his Promise, *Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12. Isa. xl. 11. O wandring Sheep, here is the Fold*. It is like the Gathering of Doves to their Windows, *Isa. lx. 8. Who are these that fly as a Cloud, as Doves to their Windows?* The Wounds of Christ, the Holes of the Rock of Ages, the Promise sealed with his Blood, and all his Offices, are the Windows; and to gather to him, is to fly to these Windows, and make your Nest in the Rock. It is like the Gathering of Fishes into a Net, *Mat. xiii. 47. The Kingdom of Heaven, or the Gospel, is likened unto a Net cast into the Sea, gathering of every Kind*. When the Gospel-net is spread, do not swim away: *may be your Thoughts are swimming in the Air*, when the

they should be gathered about the Mouth of the Nest. Sometimes it is likened to the Gathering of Chickens under the Wings of a Hen, *Mat. xxiii. 37. Luke xiii. 34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, but ye would not!* O the Wings of his Grace, the Wings of Righteousness, the Wings of his Merit, the Wings of his Mercy are stretched! If we will not be gathered, the silly Chickens will witness against us; for they gather at the Clock of the Hen under her Wings. Again, it is like the gathering of Eagles to their Prey, *Matth. xxiv. 28. Where the Carcase is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together:* And, *Luke xvii. 37. Where the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* Whither should the Eagles go, but to the Prey? And, whither should the Soul go, but to Christ, who hath the Words of eternal Life? Christ's Flesh and Blood is the Carcase, which, like hungry Eagles, we should be gathering unto; for *his Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed.*

3dly, From Vegetables, this gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is represented, in the following Respects; It is like the gathering of Wheat into a Barn, *Matth. iii. 12. He will gather his Wheat into his Garner. Matth. xiii. 30. Gather the Wheat into my Barn:* God will not lose a Grain of his Wheat; he will not only gather it to the Barn to be kept, but the Granary to be purified. It is like the Gathering of Grafts into a Branch, *John xv. 5. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches, &c.* When God gathers Souls to himself, he takes a Branch of the old *Adam*, cuts it off from the old Stock, and ingrafts it into Christ, from whom, as the everlasting Root, it derives all the Sap of Grace, all the Fruits of Righteousness. It is like the Gathering of Plants into a Garden, or a Vineyard, *Isa. v. 7. The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the Men of Judah his pleasant Plant:* And these, whom he effectually gathers into his Garden, are called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting

of the Lord, that he may be glorified : To be gathered unto Christ, is to be planted in his House. It is like the Gathering of Fruit into a Basket, or of Flowers and Lilies for Pleasure and Intertainment, *Song vi. 2. My Beloved is gone down to his Garden, to gather Lilies* ; having gathered them into his Garden, and planted them, and suffered them to grow thro' his Grace, till they be ripe, he gathers them to himself, and picks them one by one to put them in his Bosom. But again,

4thly, From inanimate Things, this Gathering of the People to Christ is represented, in the following Respects. It is a Gathering of Vessels to an Harbour ; for, before the Soul be brought in to Christ, it is like a Ship tossed in a Tempest, and tumbling in the swelling Waves, like the Ship in which the Disciples were, when the Sea was tempestuous, and Christ came walking on the Sea towards them ; but when they are gathered in to Christ, then they are at Anchor in a safe Harbour, *Heb. vi. 19. Which Hope we have, as an Anchor sure and stedfast, entring within the Vail, whither the Fore-runner is for us entred*. It is a piercing, entring Anchor ; for, as an Anchor will not hold a Ship firm and fast, if it only ly on the Ground, and do not pierce deep into it ; so Faith will not establish the Heart, if it do not enter in to Christ, as it were, and pierce the Vail ; but when once it enters here, then the Soul is at a safe Harbour, and a sure Anchor both. Again, this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is like the Gathering of Stones to a Building, *1 Pet. ii. 4. To whom coming, as to a living Stone, disallowed indeed of Men, but chosen of God and precious ; ye also, as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual House*. We are by Nature hard Stones, senseless Stones, stupid, inflexible, dull, heavy Stones, having an Heart of Stone, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26*. but God can even of these Stones raise up Children to *Abraham*, *Matth. iii. 8. Luke iii. 9*. And what does God condescend to do, when he comes to gather Sinners ? Behold, he comes to gather Stones !

Stones ! and he sends us that are Ministers out to gather Stones : It was a Sin for the Man, to gather Stones on the Sabbath Day ; but it would be no Sin, but a good Sabbath Work for us, if we were gathering Stones this Day, to bring them to the *Chief Corner-Stone*, the sure Foundation, as Christ is called, 1 Pet. ii. 6. *Isa. xxviii. 16. This the Stone which the Builders rejected ; but the same is become the Head of the Corner.* What we translate the chief Corner Stone, some translate it the *highest*, and some the *lowest* Stone : But it is best to reconcile both, and make him both the Highest and Lowest, reaching from the first to the last ; because his Name is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last ; and because he is the Stone, that reaches from Earth to Heaven, from the Church militant to the Church triumphant ; he is the Corner-Stone to bring both Sides of the Building together, *Jews and Gentiles* into one Temple : And, *another Foundation can no Man lay*, says the Apostle, *than that is laid, which is Christ* ; to this Foundation should the Stones be gathered. *Solomon* says, *Eccl. iii. 5. There is a Time to cast away Stones, and a Time to gather Stones together.* In Allusion to this, may I say, What Sort of Time is this ? It hath long been a Time of casting away Stones, many are like castaway Stones in the Field or Desert of Nature, hard and dead Stones ; they never gather to the living Temple, by all the gathering Means and Ordinances that ever they enjoyed : They look like Stones ready to be cast away to Hell, to be Fuel of God's Wrath ; because the Fire of his Love and Grace, manifested in the Gospel, could never melt them. O it hath been thus a Time of casting away Stones ; when it is not a gathering Time, it is a rejecting Time. But O shall we now expect a Time of gathering Stones together ! O cry for a Day of Power, a gathering Day, a gathering Time to *Scotland* again, a gathering Time to your selves, even God's Hand of Power, for gathering Stones together to Christ the

Foundation; and so, for gathering the People to *Shiloh*.

FOURTH HEAD.

The *Fourth* Thing proposed, was, to speak of the Manner of this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. That which I intend under this Head, distinct from the former, is, to enquire, 1st, Into the Means of this Gathering; 2^{dly}, The Qualities thereof. *First*, As to the Means thereof, or by what Means the Gathering to *Shiloh* is brought about. By what Means, say you, does God gather the People, or are the People gathered to Christ? We have Warrant from Scripture to speak of these Six gathering Means. (1.) A gathering Hedge and Inclosure; I mean, the Hedge of Providence, by which he gathers People occasionally, as Sheep within an Inclosure are gathered together, that they may not get Leave to stray. This is the thorny Hedge of Affliction, whereby the Lord stops the sinful Carreer of these, whom he hath amind to gather in to himself, *Hos. ii. 6. Behold I will hedge up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall that she shall not find her Paths.* Thus *Manasseh* was caught among the Thorns, 2 *Chro. xxxiii. 11.* And to this Purpose, says *David*, It was good for me that I was afflicted; for before I was afflicted, I went astray, *Psal. cxix. 67.* Thus some Affliction or other many Time is made Use of, as the occasional Mean of gathering straying Souls to Christ, or some alarming Providence, as that which *Paul* met with, *Acts ix.* and the Jaylor, *Acts xvi.* when the Foundation of the Prison was shaken with an Earthquake: But this leads me to another Mean. (2.) There is a gathering Storm and Tempest, with Thunder and Lightning from Mount *Sinai*, whereby an Earthquake is raised in the Conscience, or rather a Heart-quake in the Soul, By this Mean of Law-Terrors and Convictions, according to the Measure wherein it is dispensed, he gathers the People preparatively, as by the former occasionally. This Dispensation is called a *Tempest*, *Heb. xii. 18.* accompanied with

Black.

lackness and Darkness, and burning Fire: And as a
 howling Storm, or beating Tempest, makes a Man
 to betake himself to a House for Shelter; So the
 storm of legal Conviction and Humiliation makes
 People fain to gather unto *Shiloh*. Hence the Law is
 said to be our Schoolmaster, to school us to Christ, as
 the Word there signifies, *Gal. iii. 24*. By the Law is
 the Knowledge of Sin, and the Conviction of Wrath;
 and while the storm of Law-Threatnings, Law-Curses,
 Law-Vengeance is beating and battering on the Soul,
 it is fain to cry out, What shall I do to be saved? And
 where shall I go to be sheltered? Under this Dispen-
 sation, there are Two Things that the Soul sees,
 when the Law comes with Force, namely, the Spiritu-
 ality of the Command, and the Severity of the
 Threatning. The Spirituality of the Precept discov-
 ered makes the Man cry, O I'm unclean, unclean. The
 severity of the Threatning discovered makes him cry
 out, O I'm undone, undone. O the infinite Holiness
 of God in the Precept can never be gratified by any
 Obedience of mine, for I'm a sinful Beast. O the in-
 finite Justice of God in the Threatning can never be sa-
 tisfied by any Suffering of mine, for I'm a finite Worm;
 there be not another Shift for me, I'm lost and gone
 for ever. Thus, *Rom. vii. 9*. the Soul that was alive
 without the Law once, now when the Commandment
 comes, Sin revives, and it dies, &c. (3.) As the ga-
 thering Inclosure of Providence is the occasional Mean,
 and the gathering Storm and Tempest of Law-Con-
 viction is the preparative Mean, so the gathering
 Trumpet of the Gospel is the more immediate Mean.
 The Gospel is the great gathering Inging of infinite
 Wisdom; for Faith comes by hearing of the joyful
 sound of this Trumpet, which is like the Trumpet of
 the Jubilee of old, *Lev. xxv. 9*. There is the joyful
 sound of Gospel-Revelations, and good News, That
 Christ came to save Sinners: O, when this Sound of
 the Silver Trumpet reaches not only the Ear, but the
 heart of the Sinner, that by the Law hath got the
 knowledge and Conviction of Sin and Misery, what a
 joy-

joyful Sound is it, that now he hears of the Remedy for him; that Justice is satisfied, Life is purchased, Death is destroyed, Wrath is appeased, and the Law is magnified, and God reconciled in Christ? Many gathering Sound comes through this Gospel-Trumpet: There is a Sound of Gathering Calls, saying *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. This is his Commandment, that ye believe:* A Sound of gathering Invitations, saying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden:* A Sound of gathering Proclamations, saying, *Ho, ho, every one that thirsteth, come, &c.* A Sound of gathering Exhortations, saying, *Why will ye die? joined with Complaints, I will not come to me, that ye might have Life:* A Sound of gathering Counsels, saying, *I counsel thee, buy of me Gold, &c.* A Sound of gathering Intreaties and Obtestations, saying, *We beseech you in God's Name, and pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God.* And, Finally, A Sound of gathering Musick and charming Melody; and as Children gather to the Sound of the Pipe, so the Lord Jesus complaineth *Mat. xi. 17.* when People do not joyfully gather at the Sound thereof, *We have piped unto you, and you have not danced;* yea, such are compared to deaf Addressees that stop their Ears at the Voice of Charmer, that charming never so cunningly, *Psal. lviii. 5.* O what melodious Musick in the World, so sweet as to be the Sound of Gospel-Promises, of Pardon to the Guilty, Purity to the Filthy, and Pity to the miserable Soul! This Trumpet hath a Sound of Peace, a Sound of Grace, a Sound of Mercy, a Sound of Glory to God in the Highest, and of Good-will towards Mankind. A certain Sound, in Opposition to all the legal Trumpeters, sounding forth Life and Salvation, depending upon uncertain Conditions and Qualifications on one Part: But, as says the Apostle, *1 Cor. xiv. 8.* *If a Trumpet give an uncertain Sound, who goeth forth to the Battle?* There is no Heart to go forth to the Battle of the Lord, upon such an uncertain Sound: But when the Trumpet gives a certain Sound of Victory

grace, Life, Salvation, and all, to be had, only, and
 wholly, and freely for nothing, in and through Jesus
 Christ, then who would not go forth, under the Stan-
 dard of this Captain of Salvation, at the Sound of
 his Golden Trumpet? (4.) There is the gathering
 Wind of the Spirit. Besides the gathering Inclosure of
 Providence as the occasional Mean, the gathering
 Tempest of the Law as the preparatory Mean, and
 the gathering Trumpet of the Gospel as the immediate
 Mean; There must be a gathering Wind of the Spirit,
 which is the efficacious Mean; the former Means can-
 not be effectual without this, tho' the gathering
 Trumpet of the Gospel, and the gathering Wind of
 the Spirit are most nearly related to each other, for it
 is the Gospel only that is the Ministration of the Spi-
 rit, 2 Cor. iii. 8. It is this Wind, of which the Lord
 Jesus speaks, John iii. 8. which blows where it listeth,
 and is the great Efficient of Regeneration, and Aggre-
 gation unto Christ. It is this Wind that gathers dead
 Sinners out of their Grave of spiritual Death, Ezek.
 xxxvii. 9. *Come from the four Winds, O Breath, and
 breathe, &c.* It is this mighty Wind that blows down
 the strong Holds of Satan, and casts down Imaginati-
 ons, &c. gathering the Thoughts like Captives to
 him, 2 Cor. x. 5. It is this Wind that makes the Spices
 of the Believer's Garden to flow out; for this gathe-
 ring Wind brings a gathering Rain with it, Psal. lxxii.
 8. *Awake, O North Wind, come thou South, blow
 upon my Garden, &c.* Song iv. last. O it is a happy
 Wind, that can drive a sinking Vessel to a safe Har-
 bour, and gather perishing Sinners in to a Saviour!
 But where is this Wind to be had, say you? Why, it
 is in God's Hand; 'tis said, with Respect to his King-
 dom of Providence, That he *hath gathered the Winds
 in his Fist*, Prov. xxx. 4. and it is true, with Respect
 to his Kingdom of Grace, this blessed Wind is, as it
 were, gathered in his Fist; and what a Man hath
 gathered in his Fist, he can easily distribute of it, by
 opening his Hand; so our God can easily distribute of
 the Spirit: This Wind is in his Fist, and he hath no
 more

more ado, but to open his Fist. O look to him, and cry to him, to cast a Gale of this Wind out of his Fist, a Handful of the gathering Motions of the Spirit, a Handful of the gathering Influences of this heavenly Wind, a Gale of his gathering Operations. (5.) I may add, tho' it be very sib to the former, yet it is what may give us another distinct View of the Lord's Way of gathering People; Besides the gathering Wind, there is a gathering Sun: I allude to *Psal. civ. 22* where it is said of the young Lions, *The Sun arises, and they gather themselves together to their Dens, and Man goeth forth to his Work and Labour*: As the Rising of the Sun makes the Beasts gather to their Dens, and Men gather to their Work; so the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness, in the Manifestation of the Favour of God in Christ, makes the Lions of Hell gather to their Dens, in a Manner, and Men to gather to their Work; I mean, to gather to Christ by Faith, for this is the Work of God, that ye believe in his Son, whom he hath sent. It is promised, that Men shall go forth, when the Sun rises, *Mal. iv. 2. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as Calves in the Stall*. Indeed they that go forth, to meet the rising Sun by Faith, they will grow up in all the Graces and Fruits of the Spirit of Holiness: However, I say, it is the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness, and Shining in his Glory, that makes Sinners gather to him by Faith, *John iii. 11*. He manifested forth his Glory, and then his Disciples believed in him. The Displays of his Glory are his gathering Arms, *Isa. xl. 11*. He gathers with his Arms, even the Arms of his Grace and Mercy; yea, the Displays of his glorious Grace are his Military Arms, whereby he subdues them, and gathers them into his Camp, *Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5*. (6.) In a Subordination to all these gathering Means, there is a gathering Fan, *Matth. iii. 12. Luke iii. 17. His Fan is in his Hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into his Garner*. The Devil hath his Fan, wherewith he seeks to winnow God's

People

People as Wheat, in Order to separate them from Christ, and from one another; but Christ hath his Fan, wherewith he will winnow his Church and People, in order to gather them to himself and to one another in him. By the Fan of his Word, and the Fan of his Rod, he purges the Floor of his Church: It is his threshing Floor, and sometimes he must take the Flail of his Doctrine and thresh upon his People, to separate the Chaff of Error from the Grains of Truth, and the Sound from the Erroneous. Sometimes he must take the Flail of Discipline, and severe Judgments, Rods and Calamities, to purge his Floor, and gather the Wheat from the Chaff. Tho' the great Day of Judgment will be the great Day of separating the Precious from the Vile, and Gathering of his Saints, yet there are trying Days in this World, wherein considerable Discoveries are made, and the Lord's scattered and divided Sheep are gathered together, to be more unite to one another in the Lord. It is necessary sometimes, that the Lord take his Fan in his Hand, for purging his Floor; when it is foul, it needs to be swept with a Besom: The Floor of his House is sometimes very foul; and as when one sweeps a House, if there be Dross and Dirt in it, and also Gold, and Diamonds, and Jewels, lying hid among the Dust, all may be swept to the Door together; but the Jewels being soon mist, are gathered again from among the Filth: So, when the Besom of publick Judgments and Calamities come, the Godly, as well as the Wicked, may be all swept to the Door together, and share of the same outward Strokes; but God in due Time will gather his Jewels to his Cabinet, *Mal. iii. 17. They shall be mine, in the Day when I make up my Jewels.* So much concerning the various Means of gathering.

The *second* Question upon this Head, was, to speak of the Qualities of this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*: and here the Qualities of this Gathering may be considered; either *passively*, shewing how his Power is exerted; or *actively*, shewing how their

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Faith;

Faith is exercised : Or, *1st*, The Qualities of God's Gathering the People to *Shiloh*. *2diy*. The Qualities of the Peoples Gathering to him, under his Conduct, Influence and Assistance. Now of both these particularly.

1st, *Passively*, The Qualities of God's Gathering the People to Christ, or how his powerful Grace is exerted, when, in a Way of his Power, he makes them willing, and gathers them. *1st*. His gathering Power is exerted congruously, and agreeably to the rational Nature, *Hos. xi. 4*. He *draws with the Bands of Love, and the Cords of a Man*. What is that? He even brings them over by rational Arguments upon the Judgment, and powerful Persuasion upon the Will : While the Minds of Men are blinded with Ignorance, their Affections are bent upon their Lusts; but now the Understanding being cleared, the Affections are captivated, the Man is bound with invincible Reason; and so he gathers Souls in a Way congruous to the rational Nature. *2diy*, His gathering Power is exerted affectionately and lovingly, *Hos. ii. 14*. *I will allure her, and bring her to the Wilderness, &c.* I'll, as it were, beguile her, and speak to her Heart, as the *Hebrew* signifies : I'll persuade her, that there is more Reason to yield to my Intreaties, than to the Devil's Sophistry. The Lord sweetly draws up the Lock of the Heart, and wins in upon the Affections, *Jer. xxx. 3*. *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and with loving Kindness have I drawn thee* : As a Man puts on his best Robes on his Wedding-Day, so Christ in the Day of Espousals, when he would gather the Eyes of the People to look to him, and their Affections to centre on him, he puts on his Robes of Glory and Grace, clothes himself with a Garment of Salvation, with an alluring Attire, when he courts Sinners. *3diy*, His gathering Power is exerted efficaciously ; he comes with that Argument of Omnipotence, whereby he commanded Light to shine out of Darkness ; by that same Argument whereby he commanded the Dead to arise,

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does he conquer and captivate the Soul; by that same Argument whereby Christ himself was raised, *Eph. i. 19, 20.* till there be no Power to resist, no Strength of Corruption left to oppose. The infinite Bounty of God, the infinite Beauty of Christ, and the infinite Power of the Holy Ghost all concur to gain the Soul, with infinite ravishing Sweetness: Almighty Love kills the mighty Enmity; and how can he be resisted? *Compel them to come in, &c.* Before Conversion, the Sinner is unwilling, and he cannot come to Christ because he will not; but in Conversion, the Man is made willing, and so he cannot resist, because he will not; the Will is gained, *Thy People shall be willing. 1stly,* His gathering Power and Grace is exerted seasonably, for he speaks a Word in Season to them. *Isa. l. 4. The Lord hath give me the Tongue of the Learned, to speak a Word in Season to him that is weary.* A Word or Power comes at a particular Season, at God's set Hour; and People are never gathered till that Hour come. *The Hour comes when the Dead shall hear, &c.* O happy Hour, says one, wherein the Word and Ordinances are impregnated with almighty Efficacy! When the Minister finds himself in a better Frame than ordinary, he is ready to think, that blessed Hour is come; but he may be oft mistaken. However, *the Counsel of God stands sure, the Lord knows who are his;* therefore we must preach in Faith, and pray in Faith, and wait in Hope, and water in Hope, till the accepted Time come, the happy Hour; and when it comes, it will be an Hour never to be forgotten, a signal Time, on which Eternity depends: Besides, it is seasonable with Respect to the Soul that is gathered, it comes at the Nick of Time, when it is in the Extremity of Distress, &c. Hence, *2dly,* This gathering Grace is manifested surprisingly, it is freighted with perverting Mercy: Herein God anticipates the Current of the carnal Affections; when the Soul is running post to Hell, God stops his Carrear, as he did that of Paul, *Acts ix.* Every Sinner that is converted, is gathered beside his proper natural Inten-

tion : Little does the Man foresee what is God's Design, in bringing him to such a Place, to hear such a Sermon, to live under such a Ministry ; even as little as *Saul* thought of finding a Kingdom, when he went out to seek his Father's Aises. Some have come to hear the Word, in a very customary careless Manner, not knowing where else to spend an Hour ; when lo, on a sudden, an Arrow of Conviction hath been shot into their Consciences, and awakened them to seek God. His gathering Grace both in the Beginning and Progress thereof, is still exerted in such a Manner, as sweetly surprises the Soul, *Song vi. 12. Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Champions of Amminadib* : When I was expecting, that my Soul should be gathered among the Damned, O Grace stepped in, and gathered me to *Shiloh*. 6thly, This gathering Power is exerted sovereignly, there is much Sovereignty manifested, both over the gathering Means and the gathered Soul : Over the gathering Means, such as the Word and Ordinances ; it is not every Word that does the Business : How many great Sermons, and spiritual Discourses have you heard, O Believer, and yet never a Word reached your Heart, till the Lord sent it with Power ? Hence the Word that kills one, quickens another ; the Word that is unfavoury to one, is sweet to another ; the Word that is galling to one, is gaining to another ; the Word that hardens one, softens another. Also, over the gathered Soul, many Hundreds are gathered together at a Time, yet perhaps, but one or two are touched, and reached by the Word : The Minister is speaking to the Heart of these, but only to the Ears of all the Rest. O is God finding you out by his Word, and gathering you ? He is Sovereign, *Rom. ix. 15. Shewing Mercy on whom he will, &c. 7thly*. This gathering Grace is exerted particularly, for he *calls his Sheep by Name, John x. 3.* and leads them out : As by the Law, the Sinner is convinced particularly, *Thou art the Man*, the sinful Man, the guilty Man ; so by the Gospel, he is called particularly

I have called thee by Name, *Isa. xliii. 1. & xlv.*
 4. What is offered indefinitely and generally to all, is carried Home particularly to the Soul: It comes to be as particular, as if God were speaking to none other in all the Congregation. Christ came to save Sinners, and to seek lost Souls, and particularly I am come for you Man, you Woman; *Rise, for the Master calls you.* O, says the Soul, it is me that God is speaking to, there is good News for me! 8thly, This gathering Power is exerted successfully: The Lord comes to gather, and the People are gathered; he draws, and they run, and run in to the Ark; *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous run into it, and are safe:* The Soul runs, not only to it. but in to it, so as to be found in Christ. People may be gathered to Christ, in a Manner, and yet not gathered successfully, unless gathered in to him; as in the Days of *Noah*, when the Deluge of Water came upon the World, many might gather to the Ark, and hing about the Sides of it, and climb up on it for Shelter; but the Waves at last washed them away: None came to it with Success, nor were saved, but such as went in to the Ark; so, unless you win in to Christ, be united to him, implanted in him, as a Branch to the Stock, so as to derive Life from him, and grow up in him; if you be not thus found in him, you cannot be saved by him, tho' in several Respects you may lean upon him, and grip to him: They gather to him with Success, that get in to him. O happy they, that are gathered to him, so as to *win him!* *Phil. iii. 8.* He that wins, succeeds, and much Winning, much Success; and *they may laugh that win;* for they win all, who win Christ: They win his Person for their Husband, they win his Purchase for their Jointure, his Covenant for their Charter, his Spirit for their Counsellor, his Righteousness for their Robe, his Grace for their Ornament, his Glory for their Crown, and all his Fulness for their Supply; they may live upon their Winning for ever. 9thly, This gathering Power is exerted irreversibly, yet gradually; when
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God gathers Sinners to Christ, he gathers them irreversibly ; *For the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance* ; he never leaves drawing of them, and gathering them to him, till he hath gathered them all about his Throne in Glory : His gathering Grace works a lasting Impression, and abiding Effect on them ; the Seed of God remains in them. Many hundred Sermons you have heard, and all the excellent Truths vanish, and slip off from your Memory, as Water falling on a Rock : But O, says the Believer, tho' I forget much, yet I think I never forget such a Word, that came to my Soul with a Glance of glorious Majesty in it, and filled all the Powers of my Soul with a divine seraphick Enlargement : *I will never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou hast quickned me.* Christ having begun to gather, goes on with the Soul constantly, till the Business be done and ended ; *For he waits to be gracious,* *Isa. xxx. 18.* He will not take a Refusal, nor desert for an ill Answer ; and whatever Interruption may be after the laying the Foundation, yet he carries on the good Work : it is not altogether stopt, as it is with others, that may be under some common Operations of the Spirit, the Lord may leave them, and never return ; but here he renews his Visits, and gradually advances his gathering Work ; *For his going forth is prepared as the Morning,* *Hos. vi. 3.* and he comes to them, *as the Rain, as the latter and former Rain upon the Earth,* which makes the Fruits of the Ground gradually to spring up. A sudden Work is seldom a sound Work, says one. However, his ordinary way of gathering is by various Degrees ; he gives them now a Pull, and then a Pull, here a little, and there a little. 1ctbly, This gathering Power is exerted remarkably : Hence the Soul can say, Once I was blind, now I see. Tho' the Kingdom of Heaven comes not with outward Observations, yet either in the Beginning, or Progress, or both, it is remarkable, discernable, and sensibly felt, by the Soul that is wrought upon and gathered.

He hears the Voice of the great Shepherd, he sees his Glory, he feels his Power. Sometimes 'tis remarkable, in the very Beginning; like a Man born blind, and come to Age, and getting his Eyes suddenly opened, he cannot but know the Time: In others it is not so remarkable, till the Progress thereof make it so; like Rain dropping from a House-Top on a Flint-Stone, that by constant Dropping makes a Hollow in the Stone; when it began to make the Hollow at first, is hard to tell, but that it is made, is remarkably evident: Even so here, by the constant Dropping of the Rain of the Spirit's Influences, from Time to Time; there is an Hollow made in the Heart; the Man is gradually emptied of Sin, and Self-righteousness; and Nothing can fill that Hollow, but a God in Christ: When it began at first, he cannot tell; but now it is remarkable, if Grace be in any Measure exercised. Thus you see the Qualities of God's Gathering People, yet after all, we are not capable to give an exact Account of the Outgoings of this mighty gathering Grace; many feel it, who cannot tell the particular Manner thereof; *for the Wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the Sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.*

Preached at *Airth*, June 19th, 20th, & 21st, 1725.

2dly, *Actively* viewed, the Qualities of this Gathering, that is, of the Peoples Gathering to *Shiloh*; or the Way how Faith is exercised, or how the Soul acts, when it is prevailed upon to come to the Lord Jesus, and so to be gathered unto *Shiloh*. In general, it is by Faith that they gather to him; and hence this Gathering to *Shiloh* is so frequently called a *Coming* to him, and *Believing* on him, *trusting* and *staying* our selves upon him. In this Gathering unto *Shiloh*, the Soul acts believably; and all the other Qualities of this Gathering are reducible to this, and are so many Ways,

Ways, wherein Faith acts, in coming and gathering to Christ; or how, being acted they act: And here is Matter for Trial; particularly then,

(1.) In this active Gathering unto *Shiloh*, People are made to act *spiritually*, for it is a spiritual Gathering, under the Conduct of the Spirit of God, as a Spirit of Faith, making the Soul to gather under the Wings of Christ the *Messias*. It is not by natural Might, but by the Power of the Divine Spirit, that Sinners gather to a Saviour: Not by Might, nor by Power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord; even *the exceeding Greatness of his Almighty Power*, Eph. i. 19. There is a spiritual internal Principle, from which the Man acts, in his Gathering to *Shiloh*, even the Spirit of God as the main and the new Heart as the subordinate Principle of Faith in the Man. It is not the Spirit's working extrinsically upon the Man; Hypocrites may have the Spirit working on them extrinsically, to the Production of great Affections and Inlargement, while they are not lively gathered. But this spiritual Act is from a spiritual Principle, whereof the Spirit of God within is the Spring. The former is but a natural Acting by some external Objects, it is like a Pool fed by Water from the Clouds; the other is like a Well fed by a Spring within.

Quest. How shall I know the Difference betwixt these two, *viz.* the Spirit's Working on me by his common Motions, and his Working in me as a living Principle? Why, the common Motions of the Spirit, externally moving the Affections, differ from the saving Operations of the Spirit internally elevating the Soul to a God in Christ, as a Land-flood differs from a living Spring; The Land-flood is maintained externally by the Clouds, the living Fountain is maintained internally by its own Spring: Thus the Hypocrite's Frames and Affections are maintained only by external Means and Objects, such as the tuneable Voice of the Minister; so *Ezekiel* was to his Hearers as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant Voice and can play well on an Instrument, *Ezek. xxxiii.* 32

and when the external Object or Excitement is over, then their Frame and Affection falls, because the only Thing that maintained it is gone: Whereas, in the spiritual Acting of the Soul that is gathering to *Shiloh*, tho' Faith comes by Hearing externally, yet the Spirit of God being received by the Hearing of Faith, this internal Principle of spiritual Life does many Times animate the Soul to spiritual Work, when all external Objects and Operations fail; and this may be known, just as a Spring-well is known by the Bubbling up of the Water. Thus is the Spirit's Inhabitation known by the Actings of the Graces of the Spirit, such as Faith, Love, Repentance, Joy in the Lord, and the like.

(2.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, People are made to act *Knowingly* and *Judiciously*, under the Influences of the Spirit, as a Spirit of Light; and to act as in a Matter of the greatest Concern, with Judgment and Understanding, saying, as *John vi. 68. To whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life. We believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* Many gather together in a confused Way, and know not wherefore they meet together; but this Gathering includes Knowledge, and saving spiritual Illumination: *They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee*, *Psal. ix. 10.* They that know him, will gather to him; there must be a Seeing of the Son, before there can be a Believing in him, or Gathering to him. Many, instead of gathering to Christ, they gather to an Idol of their own Fancy; when they hear of Christ, their idolatrous carnal Mind represents a carnal Image of Christ in their own Brain: As those, *Hos. xiii. 2.* that are said to have made Idols according to their own Understanding, so many in their own Imagination form an Idea of Christ; and this Idea or Image of Christ, that they have in their own Mind, is all that they have for Christ. But, O Sirs, when Christ is externally revealed in the Gospel, there must be a marvellous Light discovering him in himself, making him known, tho' not perfectly, yet really and truly as he is; not only as he is Man, but as God-Man,

having all the Fulness of the Godhead in him, and all the Glory of God appearing in his Face, 2 Cor. iv. 6. so as the Soul cannot but cleave and adhere to him. A painted Sun will neither give Light nor Heat, but the real Sun gives both: So a painted Image and Representation of Christ in the Imagination gives no spiritual Light, Heat, nor communicates any transforming Virtue; but the true Sun of Righteousness ariseth with Healing under his Wings. It is true, this Light is not without Mists and Smoke, sent forth from the bottomless Pit, to darken all; but yet there is such a clear Discovery of the Man's Inability, of God's gracious Offer, and Christ's Good-will and Mind to the Bargain, as determines the Soul to its Duty.

(3.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, People are made to act *Fiducially*. This is connected with the former, *Psal.* ix. 10. *They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee.* This I call an Acting fiducially, that is, with a believing Perswasion and particular Application: The good News, that *Shiloh* is come, that Jesus Christ is come to save Sinners, even the Chief of Sinners, is received as a faithful Saying, and so with believing Perswasion; and as worthy of all Acceptation, and so with particular Application. Perswasion with Application must be in the Nature of Faith, according to the Measure and Degree of Faith. If it be weak Faith, it is a weak Perswasion; if strong Faith, a strong Perswasion: And it is not a natural Perswasion, a Man perswading himself that all shall be well with him, and so no more of it; nay, it is supernatural and comes of God, which natural carnal Perswasion does not, *Gal.* v. 8. This Perswasion comes not of him that calleth you, intimating that right Perswasion comes of God; like that of *Abraham*, *Rom.* iv. 20, 21. *He staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief, but was strong in the Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully perswaded that he that had promised was able to perform.* And like that of the Old Testament Believers, *Heb.* xi. 13. *who received not the Promises by Feeling, but by Faith.* But how? Why, they were per-

perswaded of them, and embraced them. But here there is a twofold Perswasion that ought to be carefully distinguished, and the Confounding whereof occasions many Mistakes and Misrepresentations ; namely, a *Fiducial* Perswasion, and an *Evidential* Perswasion. The Former is the Assurance of Faith, and in the Nature of it ; the Other is the Assurance of Sense, and consequential to Faith, and is not properly Faith at all, but Sense. Now this fiducial Perswasion differs from evidential, in four Respects. 1. They differ in their *Acts*. By fiducial Perswasion, the Man receives and rests upon Christ, and trusts in him for Salvation to himself, believing and expecting this Salvation according to the Promise of the Gospel, and as Christ is offered and exhibite to him therein : But by evidential Perswasion, the Man knows and feels that he hath received Christ. The Former every Believer hath, when he acts Faith ; the Latter many Believers want even when they act Faith, because, tho' they may be conscious that they are acting upon Christ for Salvation, yet they may not be conscious of the Quality of the Act, if it is saving or not. 2. They differ in their *Order*. We first believe by a fiducial Perswasion, before we can be sure by an evidential Perswasion ; the one is the Cause, and the other the Effect ; the Perswasion, that is in Faith, is like the Heat in the Fire ; the Perswasion, that is after Faith, is like Heat in the Room, that is the Effect of the former : And, because Assurance (that is commonly so called, namely, the *Assurance of Sense*) is the Effect of Faith ; This will not prove, that there is no Assurance in Faith, no more than Heat in the Room will prove, that there is no Heat in the Fire ; for the contrary is rather evident. 3. They differ in their *Objects and Grounds* : The Object and Ground of fiducial Perswasion, or of the Assurance of Faith, is without the Man, and looks to the Word and Promise of God, the Blood and Righteousness of Christ, the Truth and Faithfulness of God : But, the Object and Foundation of evidential Perswasion, or of the Assurance

rance of Sense, is within the Man, and looks to the Work of God within; such as Graces, Attainments and Experiences. As there is a great Difference betwixt a Man's being perswaded, that he hath such a Sum of Money, because he hath it upon Bond, or good Security; and his being perswaded thereof, because he hath it in his Hand, in his Chest or Coffers; so here, by the Perswasion of Faith, the Man is perswaded of Salvation thro' Christ, because he hath it upon Bond, namely, God's Promise sealed with Christ's Blood, which is good Security: But the Ground of the Perswasion of Sense, is the Man's having it in his Hand, or so much of it, which is not Faith, but Sense. 4. They differ in their *Effects*; the Effect of Faith, or fiducial Perswasion, is Justification; the Effect of Sense, or evidential Perswasion, is Consolation: A Man is not justified by his evidential Perswasion, or by knowing and feeling that Christ is his; but he is justified by his fiducial Perswasion, by his fiducial Knowledge, whereby he receives and rests upon Christ as his, and trusts in him for Salvation to himself: By this fiducial Knowledge, I say, is Justification, *Isa. liii. 11. By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.* Now, if these two were carefully distinguished, and that People considered, that it is the former, namely fiducial Perswasion, that we put into the Nature of Faith, as essential to it, not the latter, namely evidential Perswasion, which is consequential to it; it would prevent many Mistakes, and Misrepresentations on this Head; as if some placed Assurance so in the Nature of Faith, as that none were to be reckoned Believers, but such as have this full evidential Perswasion, and Assurance of Sense, which is a gross Misapprehension of Matters, and flows from the confounding of this twofold Perswasion, which differ as much as Faith and Sense; Assurance of Faith carries in it the Perswasion of the Faithfulness of God in the Promise; the Assurance of Sense carries in it a Perswasion of the Reality of Grace in the Heart: By the one we see with our Eyes, as it were; by the other

we handle with our Hands the Word of Life : The
 one, to wit, Faith is begun Vision, the other, to wit,
 Sense is begun Fruition : Assurance of Faith is essen-
 tial to Faith, the Assurance of Sense is consequential
 to it, and not always in, or with it. And hence we
 say, with Respect to this evidential Assurance and Per-
 swasion, as our *Confession* hath it, *That it does not so*
belong to the Essence of Faith, but that a true Belie-
ver may wait long, and conflict with many Difficulties
before he be Partaker of it; namely, of that Assu-
 rance, that is grounded upon the inward Evidence of
 Grace, and Testimony of the Spirit, which is the
 Assurance of Sense there spoken of : But the Assu-
 rance of Faith, which is founded upon the divine
 Truth of the Promise of Salvation, and upon the
 Word of God without us, as the Object thereof, this
 must be as essential to Faith, as Seeing is essential to
 the Eye : And yet this will not say, That the Belie-
 ver hath always even this fiducial Perswasion, unless
 his Faith be in Exercise : For, as it is in the Nature
 of the Eye to see, tho' the Man, that hath Eyes, is
 sometimes sleeping, or winking, or dim sighted ; so
 it is in the Nature of Faith, to be perswaded of the
 Favour and Good-will of God in Christ, as revealed
 in the Word of Grace, tho' he, that hath this Faith,
 is sometimes doubting, sometimes Faith is not exer-
 cised, sometimes the Eye of Faith is dimmed with the
 Dust of Corruption and Unbelief. It is with Faith,
 as with other Graces : As some have a true Love to
 Christ, yet dare not say they love, because they have
 so much Enmity remaining : They have true Grace,
 but dare not say they have it, because they have so
 much Sin and Corruption ; but their doubting of
 their Love and Grace does not infer, that they have
 no Love, no Grace ; so some have this fiducial Perswa-
 sion, and Assurance of Faith, who yet dare not say
 they have it, because they have so much Unbelief
 and so many Doubts : But as Love is opposite to
 Enmity, and Grace opposite to Corruption, tho' they
 are in the same Subject ; so is Faith opposite to Doubt-
 ing

ing, in its very Nature, even tho' Faith and Doubting may be in the same Believer, as Light and Darkness in the same Air ; yet their Natures are opposite to one another. As this fiducial Act of *Gathering to Shiloh* imports a believing Perswasion, so also a particular Application. In the Offer of the Gospel, Salvation is particularly held forth to every one, saying, *The Promise is to you ; to you is the Word of this Salvation sent ;* therefore in *Gathering to Christ*, People are to lay Hold on Salvation to themselves particularly : *Christ came to save Sinners, of whom,* says Faith, *I am the chief ;* Mercy is held out to me, and I lay Hold on it as held out to me : As when the Law comes with Power, it says not only in the general, *All have sinned ;* but it comes in particular, saying, *You have sinned ;* and makes you say, *I am the Man*, the sinful Man, the guilty Man, the condemned Man : So when the Gospel comes with Power, it speaks to the Person particularly, saying, Not only, *Christ came to save Sinners ;* but, *Here is a Saviour for you : And the Soul is made to say, I am concerned in this.* The Gospel offers Life and Salvation to the poor Soul particularly, and he is commanded to believe for Salvation particularly, and the Man believes with particular Application. Thus a certain Divine illustrates it : As the sad Sentence of the Law, generally and indefinitely held forth in the Scripture, is particularly applied for his Conviction and Condemnation ; so the precious Promise of the Gospel, generally and indefinitely held forth to all Sinners, that hear the Gospel, is particularly applied for Salvation ; and without this particular Application, there is no effectual *Gathering to Shiloh* : When Gospel-light shines in to the Heart of the awakened Sinner, it applies the Promise particularly to it self, as it did formerly apply the Threatnings of the Law particularly ; and as from the Law it did particularly condemn it self ; so now, from the Gospel, it does by Faith particularly absolve it self, or rather find it self absolved from the

Law-Sentence, in its being helped to make particular Application of the Gospel-Promises.

Again, (4.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, the People that are brought to him are made to act *evangelically*, or to believe, in a Gospel-Manner, to receive and rest upon him, as he is offered to us in the Gospel. There is a Gospel Ground, on which the People do gather: Legal Faith acts, upon a legal Ground, such as inherent Strength, and natural Righteousness; but true Faith acts upon the Ground of a borrowed Strength, and an imputed Righteousness of another, saying, *Surely in the Lord only have I Righteousness and Strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. This Gathering to *Shiloh* is a self-renouncing Business, stripping the Man of his own Righteousness, of his own Strength, taking him indirectly off his own Bottom; they that are gathered to Christ, are gathered out of themselves. There is a Gospel-Rule also, whereby they gather, in a Suitableness to the Gospel-Offer and Dispensation, 1 Cor. xv. 11. *So we preach, and so ye believed*. Faith answers the Gospel-Call, as the Impress upon the Wax does answer the Ingravings of the Seal; so Christ offers himself, and so Sinners gather to him, and believe in him for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. Hence again, there is a Gospel-Order, wherein the Gathering of the People is to him; the Soul, in coming to him, receives first the Person, and then the Portion; even as God gives Christ, and then with him all Things, Rom. viii. 32. The People gather to him, in a Day of Power, *First*, as a Jesus, *and then*, as a Lord; *First*, for Justification, *and then*, for Sanctification. Legal Adventurers invert this Gospel-Order, seeking Sanctification first, that upon that Bottom it may build its Justification; seeking Righteousness, *as it were*, *by the Works of the Law*, Rom. ix. 32. And however confused and indistinct the true Believer's Faith may be, in his first Believing, yet repeated Acts of Faith may afterwards make it more and more evident to him, that right Believing is in the foresaid Gospel-Order. There is a

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Gospel-Warrant, upon which this Gathering proceeds: They that gather to *Shiloh* act warrantably, upon the the Warrant of an objective Sufficiency; there is a sufficient Christ presented: O the Sufficiency of his Person, being God-Man in one Person; the Sufficiency of his Offices and Commission, being sealed of God to be a Surety, a Saviour, a Prophet, Priest and King; the Sufficiency of his Righteousness, his Doing and Dying, his Obedience and Satisfaction; the Sufficiency of his Power, as being able to save to the uttermost; the Sufficiency of his Will, while he proclaims his Good-will towards Men; and that God is in Christ, reconciling the World to himself! They gather, upon the Warrant of a general Gospel-Dispensation of Grace through Christ, in the external Revelation of the Word, where the Elect are not characterized more than others, but Life and Salvation through Christ held out to Sinners of Mankind, without Distinction of Nation, State or Condition; and so in an indefinite Way. Thus run all the Promises, except these that are made to Believers, or such as have Grace already; to them indeed the Promises are definite, so also they are definite to the Elect, in the Decree of Heaven; but in the external Dispensation of the Gospel, they are indefinite and general, saying, To you belongs the Covenants and the Promise, *Rom. ix. 4.* and as the Promise is indefinite, so the Call is universal, whether by Exhortations, Invitations, Intreaties, Counsels or Commands, to all and every one, to come and receive Christ, and all his sure Mercies freely, *Isa. lv. 1.* and upon these Gospel-Warrants do the People gather to *Shiloh*. In a Word, the whole Covenant, and all the Promises of it, are held forth to all the People, that they may gather to it; *I'll give thee for a Covenant of the People, Isa. xlii. 6.* Hence we are said, *to receive the Promise through Faith Gal. iii. 14. to be persuaded of them, and embrace them, Heb. xi. 13.* and the Faith we are called to, is said to be a *Receiving of the Word, Acts ii. 41. a Taking hold of his Covenant, Isa. lvi. 4. a Believing of the*

Testimony, 2 Theff. i. 10. Christ cannot be received, but as he is offered; he is not offered to us, but in a Word, a Promise, a Testimony: Hence the substantial Act of Faith being an Assent, there must be a Word, Promise, or Testimony, for Faith's immediate Object, wherein we see and receive Christ: If a Man would see his Shadow in a Glass, he first looks to the Glass, and through it sees his own Shadow or Image; the Glass is the immediate Object, to which his Sight is directed; so, in Order to our seeing of Christ, the Glass of the Gospel-promise is set before us. Thus a displayed Covenant of Grace, as standing fast in Christ, seems to be the Warrant for the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, mentioned, *Jer. l. 5. Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant* (says our Reading) *that shall not be forgotten*: I know this is viewed, by some, in another Sense, with Reference to our covenanting; but I think the original Reading that others notice is very pleasant and evangelical, for it may be read, *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, the perpetual Covenant shall not be forgotten*, q. d. Come and let us gather together unto *Shiloh*; why, the everlasting Covenant, that stands fast in him, who is the All of the Covenant, shall never be forgotten: And so it may be viewed, as an Encouragement of Faith, and Reason for the Gathering of the People to him; behold he is given for a Covenant of the People, and this perpetual Covenant shall not be forgotten: Thus they are made to act evangelically.

(5.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, the People that are brought to him are made to act *cordially* and spontaneously, with Heart and Will; yea, with a Thousand Good-Wills; *O take my Heart*, says the Man, in the Day of Power, *take it, and a Thousand Blessings with it*. It is true, there is no Gathering, no Approaching to him, without a Draught of Omnipotency; yet there is no Violence in it, no Force or Compulsion; but when Power comes, it takes away the Backwardness and Unwillingness, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy*
 K People

People shall be willing. Never did a Mariner draw near to a Shore with better Will, after Shipwreck, than the Soul comes to Christ, in the Day of Power ; the Person being drawn, yields necessarily and willingly both : Draw me, we will run after Thee ; *Draw me*, there is the Almighty Power exerted, in its irresistible Operation ; *We will run*, there is the voluntary Motion of the Soul : So that this Gathering does not destroy, but establish the Liberty of the Will of the rational Agent. Reason is not hoodwinked, the Person approaches to a God in Christ, upon the most rational Grounds, seeing and apprehending his Misery while far from God, and the Happiness of Nearness to him in Christ. And this Gathering is as cordial as it is voluntary ; as the Will is inclined, so the Heart is inflamed. Hypocrites may gather to Ordinances, and gather to a Communion-Table with the outward Man ; they may draw near to God with the Mouth, and honour him with the Lip, while the Heart is far removed from him : This is what God complains of, *Their Heart is far from me* : But what do I regard a Gathering of dead Corpses about my Table and Ordinances, a Gathering of Bodies, while there is no Gathering of Hearts ? But in this gracious Gathering, the Language of the Soul is, O many a Time I have given my Heart away to the Devil ; I gave my Heart and Affections away to Lusts ; I gave my Heart away to the World ; and now, shall I give Christ less than I gave them ? It will be a Miracle if he accept of it, after my manifold Departures ; but O if I had as many Souls as I had Sins, I would give them to him ! O if I could believe in him with the whole Heart, pray to him with the whole Heart, serve him with the whole Heart ; and that all my Affections, that have been struggling among the Creatures, may be gathered to him, and centred in him ! Yea, in the Day of Power, a Man finds himself so willingly and freely to come to Christ, that he is rolled upon him, as if he were carried on a Wave of the Sea, or rather in a Chariot paved with Love : Formerly he found Believing hard, yea,

yea, that it was impossible for him to come to Christ; but now he finds it impossible for him to stay away from Christ: Believing is so sweet and easy then, that, as if he had Wings, he flees for Refuge to the Hope set before him, *Heb. vi. 18.* Tho' as a great Divine (*viz. Dr. Owen*) expresses it, Faith is in the Understanding, in Respect of its Being and Subsistence; yet it is in the Will and Heart, in Respect of its effectual Working: As to its Essence, it lies in Assent, but the saving Quality of this Assent is, that it is cordial; and it is not true Faith, if it be not a cordial Assent to God's Testimony concerning Christ. And indeed there is a great Difference betwixt a dead Assent, and a cordial hearty Assent to any Truth: Suppose (says one) you were in a foreign Land, and that you got a sure Account, that the *Turks* have got a Victory over the *Persians*; and at the same Time you hear, that your beloved Spouse is recovered of a dangerous Disease, that all your Family is well, and your Affairs prosper: There is a great Difference betwixt the Way of assenting to these Two; you believe the former, but it hath no Impression on your Heart, it is only a naked, heartless, unconcerned Assent; but you would believe the other cordially and gladly, because you are much concerned therein: Hence you would welcome the Messenger. Thus the Gospel is not only a faithful Saying, but worthy of all Acceptation; and in gathering to Christ, in the Day of Power, the Soul acts cordially.

(6.) In this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, they are made to act *humbly* and *reverentially*: The *Man* comes with a *What am I, and what is my Father's House?* Behold I am vile, and if the Lord will have Mercy on me, it is well; Grace shall have the Glory; but if not, I may even preach his Righteousness in Hell, and declare he never wronged me, he is a just God. O the Soul acts *humbly*, in the Day of powerful Gathering, *Ezek. xvi. 63.* *That thou mayst remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth, because of thy Shams, when I am pacified towards*

towards thee for all that thou hast done. O but a Soul, convinced of its own Unworthiness, and Desert of Hell, and that scarce can expect any Thing but utter Damnation; how does the first Dawning of Mercy melt and humble it! O whence is this to such a Worm as I! He stands behind Christ weeping, and washing his Feet with Tears. When one of the first Works of the Spirit in Conversion, is, to give the Soul a Light in its Hand, to go down to the dark Cellars of his Heart, and make Discoveries, so as he stands amazed, trembling at the Sight of himself; and the next Work of the Spirit, is, to lead him to the lightsom Chamber of the King of Glory, to bring him from Darkness to Light; O how is he melted with a Sense of Mercy, and humbled with a Sense of his own monstrous Vileness! *Now mine Eyes see thee, wherefore I abhor my self.* O in such a Day, the Man sees his Heart vile, his Lips vile, his Practice vile, his Righteousness vile and filthy Rags; he sees in his Bosom, as it were, an Hell of Devils and unclean Spirits; that when he thinks on himself, it makes him lothè and scunner, as it were, like a Man ready to hock or vomit, when he sees some filthy nasty Thing, especially among his Meat; or as a Man's Flesh will creep, when he sees some filthy venomous Toad or Viper: So it is with these, that see themselves in the Lord's Light, in the Day of their Gathering to *Shiloh*. They that were never humbled, were never gathered; and they that have been deeply humbled, have come to God with Ropes about their Necks, as worthy to be cast over the Gibbet, and hanged over the Fire of God's everlasting Vengeance; they have been humbled to the Dust, yea humbled to Nothing before the Lord, and to a thousand times less and worse than Nothing; yea they cannot see such vile Monsters among all the Devils in Hell as themselves; they come therefore with Humility, Reverence and godly Fear.

(7.) In this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, under the Influence of gathering Power and Grace, they are made to act *boldly*, tho' *humbly*, *Heb. iv. last*

Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Heb. x. 9. We have Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus. Eph. iii. 12. In whom we have Boldness, and Access with Confidence, by the Faith of him. Here is the Boldness of Faith, in Opposition to the Boldness of Presumption. Bold Faith comes walking on a Sea of Blood, or rather upon the red and white Pavement of the active and passive Obedience of Christ. This Boldness of Faith's Approach to a God in Christ is remarkable for several Things: It is remarkable for the *Vehemency*, that is sometimes in it; O how vehemently does the Soul act, when it is laying Siege to Heaven, by the Prayer of Faith and importunate Supplication, crying, *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief; Lord, increate my Faith; Lord, give a Drink of the Water of the Well of Bethlehem! O for a Drop of the precious Blood of the Lamb! O Man, Woman, where are the Bed-sides, and secret Corners, that can bear Witness to your Besieging Heaven with your vehement Cries? It is remarkable for the Violence that is in it; The Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* The Man acts, as it were, violently; *If I perish, I perish; at Christ I must be.* It acts in a Manner willingly; *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him; I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* The Soul, as it were, violently casts it self upon the free Grace and Faithfulness of God, in the greatest Distress; and here it lies, as it were, at Anchor in such stormy Days, *Heb. vi. Close.* It is remarkable for the *Confidence* that is in it: It hath the Confidence to give God a Testimonial, as it were; when Faith is acted, not only does God give the Man a Testimonial, *Heb. xi. 5, 6. Enoch had this Testimony, that he pleased God; but without Faith it is impossible to please him; but what is yet more strange, Faith not only gets a Testimonial from God, but gives a Testimonial to him, John iii. 33. He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true.* Here is the Confidence and Assurance of Faith; it acts upon an

infallible Testimony, the Divine Veracity and Faithfulness; a *Thus saith the Lord*, is the firm Foundation, upon which Faith is built. It is a Receiving the Record of God; and all Acts of Faith, without this, are but as so many Arrows shot at random in the open Air. Many a confident Address does Faith make; it ventures to go as far Ben, as *the Holy of Holies*, by *the Blood of Jesus*; It ventures the Soul upon the Blood of the Son of God, and upon the Promise of a God in Christ: Here is the Boldness of Faith. To gather in to *Shiloh*, and believe in him, is in Effect to say, I adventure my Soul upon Nothing in the World, but upon the Promise of a God, that I have provoked, and been an Enemy to all my Days; I have Nothing, but the Word of this God; and yet I must adventure upon it, even my everlasting A L L. It is an adventuring Act, like *Peter* upon the boisterous Water, with this in his Mouth and Heart, *Master, save me*. To venture upon the Promise of a provoked God, and to believe him to be a God in Christ reconciled according to his Word, upon Account of the Ransom he hath found out, and the Propitiation he hath set forth; here is the Boldness of Faith. And again, it is remarkable for its *Resoluteness*; the Person, like the Woman with the bloody Issue, presses resolutely through Crouds of Devils and Lusts, and, with an irresistible Intensity of Soul, forces a Passage thro' all Obstructions, to get a Touch of the Sceptre of King Jesus: We are called to *come with full Assurance of Faith*, with an holy Resolution and Courage. When a poor trembling *Roman* approached the Emperor *Augustus*, he was in some Fear; *What*, says the Emperor, *take you me for an Elephant that will tear you?* So we should come with Boldness to Christ. He encourages the worst of Sinners; he hath given his Word for it, which is firm as the Pillars of Heaven and Earth, and stable like Mountains of Brass, that *him that cometh he will in nowise cast out*: When he comes at first, he will not cast him out; when he comes again afterwards, he will not cast

cast him out ; he will not cast out the vilest and most desperate Sinner that comes ; he will not cast him out of his Favour now, he will not cast him out of Heaven at last : No, no, *He will in nowise cast him out.* We may gather to *Shiloh*, and come with the greatest Boldness ; and welcome, welcome, welcome shall we be for ever. In a Word, this Boldness is remarkable for the *Solemnity* that is in it, it is a solemn Gathering : The People, that gather to *Shiloh*, come to him with a *Behold*, *Fer. iii. 22. Behold, we come unto thee ; for thou art the Lord our God.* The Heart goes out with some Kind of Eminency and Solemnity : *Behold we come ;* let Heaven and Earth be Witnesses ; we take Instruments, as it were, in every Angel's Hand, in every Creature's Hand, in every Spire of Grafs's Hand, that we are come back to a God in Christ : We are satisfied the whole Universe attest, and behold what we are going to do : Not that the Believer loves to blaze Abroad his Religion indecently ; no, it is especially a silent, secret, Heart-gathering, and Soul-approach to *Shiloh* ; but they are so far from being ashamed of the Match, and so well pleased are they with it, that they are content it be registrate in Heaven, and that the whole Creation attest it ; *Behold we come !* The Man acts with a solemn Boldness.

(8.) In this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, they that are under the Conduct of gathering Grace and Power, are made to act *regularly* ; no Wonder, for in *Gathering to Shiloh, their Footsteps are ordered by the Lord*, and according to his Word, the unerring Rule of Faith and Manners : It is in many Respects a regular Address and Approach ; and here I shall name some other Particulars, which I suppose may be included in the Regularity of this Approach. *1st.* When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *penitentially* ; and Faith in its Address to him acts penitentially, mournfully and tenderly, *Fer. l. 4, 5. Going and weeping, they shall go and seek the Lord their God : They shall*
ask

ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward saying, Come and let us join our selves to the Lord. Going and Weeping, this Manner of Gathering is not inconsistent with the cordial and cheerful Acting, that I spoke of already ; For the Tears of Gospel-repentance are Tears of Joy, and Faith's Apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ, influences both the Sorrow and the Joy : It is said of New Testament Believers, *Isa. xxxv. 10. The Ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads ; they shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away.* Tho' this will not take Place in its Perfection but in Heaven, yet it hath its begun Accomplishment in all Believers that are gathered in to *Shiloh* : they obtain Joy and Gladness, and legal Sorrow and Sighing do flee away ; for, according to the Measure of their Faith in Christ, they have Joy and Peace in believing : Yea, in him believing, they rejoice, with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. But Gospel-Sorrow and Godly-Sorrow does not mar the Musick in this joyful Song ; for while they look on him, whom they have pierced, and mourn, *Zech. xii. 10.* and see him wounded for their Sins, *Isa. lv. 5.* they see, at the same Time, the Blood issuing out at these Wounds, to be Justice-satisfying Blood, Wrath-appeasing Blood, Hell-quenching Blood, and Heaven-purchasing Blood ; hence a sweet Mixture of Joy and Sorrow both. These seem to be joined together, *Jer. xxxi. 9. They shall come with Weeping, and with Supplications will I lead them.* It may be rendered, as you may see, in the Margine of some of your Bibles, *with Favours will I lead them.* As the Sense of their own Sins and Ingratitude makes them come with Weeping ; so, at the same Time, the Sense of God's Favours, and Kindness in Christ, makes them come with Rejoicing ; for with loving Kindness does he draw them, and with Favours does he lead them : O when he favours such a guilty Sinner with a Pardon, such a filthy Sinner with a Laver of Blood, such a

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naked Sinner with a Robe of Righteousness, such a black Sinner with a beautiful Ornament, such a Hell-deserving Sinner with a Promise of Glory, such a backsliding Beast with a merciful Visit or Return, and such a prodigal Wretch with a compassionate Embrace; and thus with Favours does lead them. O then it is hard to tell, whether the Voice of Joy, or the Voice of Weeping in the Soul be loudest. But as we render it also, it is most expressive of this penitential Address, in gathering to *Shiloh*; with weeping, and with Supplication does he lead them. Indeed Faith's Approach is begun, maintained and nourished, by Prayer and Supplication, saying, *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief; Lord, increase our Faith*. There are some have a presumptuous Faith, that can believe when they will, without praying down the Spirit of Faith from God; as they can eat and drink, and sleep and walk, and talk, tho' they pray not for Strength to do these Things, so they can exercise their natural presumptuous Faith, saying, I trust in God's Mercy, and their false Repentance, saying, God forgive me, I am a great Sinner; they can believe and repent, without Prayer and Supplication for Grace and Strength to do so: But true Grace, true Faith and Repentance, is attained and maintained, in a Way of Supplication; And hence true Faith does increase and decrease, according to the Increase and Decrease of the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication. If it be not so with you, Man, know it, that tho' your false Faith may give you some false Peace for a while, yet when Death and Eternity stare you in the Face, then the Rottenness of your Faith will be discovered, the Hope of the Hypocrite will perish. They that are gathered to *Shiloh*, they come with Weeping, and with Supplication does he lead them. I am not here to enter upon the Dispute, anent the Priority of Faith to Repentance, in their natural Order, and in their Acting and Exercise; it is well if you know both, whether you know the Order or not; only, if whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, you may guess what Sort of Repentance

it is that is not of Faith: And when the Word of God speaks any where of the proper Order, let your Experience, consonant to the Word, witness, and you'll find, that such as the Faith is, such will the Repentance be. Legal Faith works legal Repentance; Gospel Faith, Gospel Repentance; true Faith, true Repentance. Thus, when the People of *Niniveh* believed God, then they proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth, *Jon.* iii. 5. when they believed his Threatning, and yet that he was not irreconcilable, nor implacable, then they repented. Thus, when a Man believes, and apprehends that God is pacified towards him, then he is confounded and ashamed, *Ezek.* xvi. *Last*. When you have harsh Thoughts of God, and no Hope of Favour at his Hand, I trow then you'll find your Heart hard like a Stone, and inflexible; but when you get kindly Thoughts of God, and Apprehension of his Mercy and Good-will, and Love to you in Christ, then I suppose you will find joyful Meltings, and Gospel-Sorrow: O the Fire of God's Love melts the Soul! And the Hardness and Impenitency is healed, when the Sun of Righteousness arises with Healing under his Wings, *Mal.* iv. 2. The Qualities of this penitential Approach you may see, *2 Cor.* vii. 11. And this penitential Acting of Faith runs through the whole of the Believer's Life, in an universal Tenderness of Disposition and Deportment, according to the Measure of Faith: And there are Six tender Things in it, which the Believer hath. (1.) He hath a tender Heart, called a broken and contrite Heart, broken for Sin, and from Sin; *Josiah* his Heart was tender. (2.) A tender Conscience; some have a Conscience scared as with a hot Iron, and that is a silent Conscience; but the Penitent hath a smitten Conscience, as *David's* Heart smote him, when he cut off the Lap of *Saul's* Garment. (3.) A tender Eye; *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn;* Rivers of Tears run down their Eyes, because of their own Sins, and the Sins of others, who break God's Law. (4.) A tender Ear, which being circumcised, does hear and fear; *To this Man will I look, even to him*

him that is poor, and of a contrite Heart, and trembles at my Word. (5.) A tender Lip or Tongue, that dare not lie, nor speak prophanely: *I said, I will take Heed to my Ways, that I sin not with my Tongue.* And, (6.) A tender Hand, that dares not touch the Garments spoted with the Flesh, but studies to shun all Appearances of Evil; or, if you will, you may add, *lastly*, That he hath a tender Foot, saying with *Hekiah*, *I will go softly all my Tears in the Bitterness of my Soul.* And this leads to another Quality of this regular Approach. *2dly*, When there is a gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *obedientially*, as well as *penitentially*; it is an obediential Gathering: And as Faith acts penitentially, so it acts obedientially; for it works by Love, *Gal. v. 6.* it purifies the Heart, *Acts xv. 9.* and the Man that hath it purifies himself, even as God is pure, *1 John iii. 3.* It stirs up to new Obedience; for Faith without Works is dead, *Jam. ii. 20, 26.* Wherever it is, it is still working, and it can no more be idle than the Fire can be. It is true, we are justified by Faith without Works, as the Apostle says, that is, without the Causality of Works, without the Conditionality of Works, without the Instrumentality of Works, and without the Influence of Works upon our Justification; but not without the Presence of Works; for justifying Faith is a sanctifying Thing, and natively works, as the Fire natively burns: Common Faith is a dead useless Faith, making no Change or Alteration on the Soul where it is; but saving Faith acts always obedientially; hence you read of the Obedience of Faith, *Rom. xvi. 26.* importing both that Faith acts in Obedience to the Divine Call at first, and that it influences the Soul to all the Acts of Gospel-obedience afterwards. O, says the returning Sinner, that is making this obediential Address to a God in Christ, I have been a fugitive Servant to the most glorious Lord and Master; I have deserted his Service, and denied my Obedience; but now, Lord, nail my Ear to thy Door-post, that I may serve thee for ever; nail

my Heart to thy Service, that no Trouble, Temptation, Devil or Desertion may drive me away from thee; nail my Eyes to thy Service, that I may never look upon Vanity; nail my Hands to thy Service, that I may never do an ill Turn; nail my Feet to thy Way, that I may never turn aside from thee: Let all the Faculties of my Soul be nailed to thy Service and Obedience. 3dly, When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Address to him is made *speedily*; O the poor Soul, that sees it self ready to drop into Hell, how speedily, in the Day of Power, does it flee unto Christ! *I flee to thee to hide me*, says the Psalmist: The Flight of Faith is very quick, quick and swift as Lightning, that goes from the one End of Heaven to the other in an Instant; so when the Soul is on Wing, under the Influence of the Spirit of Faith, it can flee from Earth to Heaven in a Moment. But this speedy Gathering, I understand especially in Opposition to Delays, which are dangerous in Religion: To delay coming to Christ for one Half-Hour, is dangerous exceedingly; for, if you die within that Half-Hour, you're undone to Eternity. Now, in a Day of powerful Gathering, the Soul makes no longer Delay; but is in an holy Haste, *I made Haste, and delayed not to keep thy righteous Judgments*. The Man is made to flee with Speed, and to run with Haste out of *Sodom*. 4thly, When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *deliberately*; tho' it is with Speed, yet it is with Deliberation: Tho' none can believe too soon by a saving Faith, yet some believe too soon by a temporary Faith, never having weighed Matters in the Balance of the Sanctuary. The true Approacher puts the Matter in a fair Balance: He puts the Disadvantages in one Scale, saying, What will be my Fare, if I come not to Christ? Why, *they that are far from him shall perish*: He puts the Advantages in another Scale, and comes at length to that Conclusion, *Psal. lxxiii. last. It is good for me to draw near to God*. O, of all Gatherings, the Gathering to *Shiloh* is best: *To whom shall I go? he hath*

with the Words of eternal Life. The Man is not
 affected only with a transient Flash ; no, he sees the
 Wicked oft in Prosperity, and the Godly in Adver-
 sity ; he sees the large and alluring Offers that Sin,
 Satan and the World make ; and yet after all, he de-
 liberately affirms, It is good for me to draw near to
 God and Christ : Let others say, as *Psal. iv. 6. Who*
will shew us any Good ? But my Say shall be, *Lord*
lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance on me. 5thly,
 When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Ap-
 proach and Address is made *chastly*, and uprightly :
 The Soul views the Saying, that Christ came to save
 Sinners from Sin and Wrath, not only as a faithful
 Saying, but as worthy of all Acceptation ; because the
 Beauty of Christ is discovered. Some have their Rea-
 son conquered, but not their Love ; and therefore,
 they come to Christ feignedly, and not with the whole
 Heart ; their Judgment draws one Way, and their
 Affections another ; for their Judgment is gained, but
 not their Affections : As if one should marry a Woman,
 not because of her Beauty, but because of her Patrimo-
 ny ; not from Love to her Person. but Love to her
 Portion. Some take on with Christ, and take Hold
 of the Skirt of this Jew, who yet see *no Form or Come-
 linefs in him, for which he should be desired.* But as
 it is said, *The Upright love thee ;* so they that in gather-
 ing to him act chastly and uprightly, they come to
 him out of pure Love, not for servile Ends, not to
 gratifie a natural Conscience, not for Fear of Hell
 only, but from a great Love to him, and a just Es-
 teem of him, and a strong Desire of Fellowship with
 him. The Man is content to come to Christ on Mount
Calvary, as well as on Mount *Tabor* ; when going to
Golgotha in Ignominy, as well as when riding to *Je-
 rusalem* in Triumph : He cleaves to him, when Peo-
 ple cry, *Away with him, away with him ; Crucifie*
him ; as well as when they cry, *Hosanna to the Son*
of David. He loves him when lying in a Grave, as
 well as when mounted on a Throne. The chaste and
 upright Comer cleaves to him, when Kings and Prin-
 ces

ces are against him, when Laws and Governments are
 against him, when Potentates and Parliaments are
 against him, as well as when they seem to be upon his
 Side. It is too true indeed, that there are many un-
 chaste Thoughts, and Looks and Lustings after Idols in
 the Hearts of true Believers, and many Defections and
 Declinings may take Place; but these are wrestled
 with and opposed by them, and that not only by their
 Light and Conscience, but by their Love and Affection
 to the Lord Jesus, saying, *O shall I thus requite the*
Lord? So that in the main they are upright. But,
 to the same Purpose, 6thly, When there is a Gathering
 of the People to *Shiloh*, the right and regular Ap-
 proach and Address to him is made *intirely* and undi-
 videdly. False and hypocritical Comers, they come
 with a divided Heart to a divided Christ; but true
 Comers, with a whole Heart to a whole Christ. The
 Legalist would marry Christ, while yet his other Hus-
 band the Law is not dead to him, nor he dead to it;
 but it is an adulterous and unlawful Match, to join
 with another Husband while the first is living.
 Hence true Believers in Christ are said to be *dead to*
the Law by the Body of Christ, Rom. vii. 4. *that they*
might be married to another, &c. And God casts down
 the old Building, turns him out of that Shelter, lets
 him see all his legal Duties, best Performances, and
 most glaring Graces, are but Fig-leaves, insufficient to
 cover his Nakedness; and discovers the Necessity, Ex-
 cellency and Glory of Christ's Righteousness; And
 the Man submits cordially to it, renouncing all Hope
 and Expectation of Life, Favour and Justification by
 the Deeds of the Law. The carnal Man would have
 Christ and his Lusts too; *But if you seek me, say*
Christ, let these go their Way. Gathering Grace makes
 the Man say, *What have I to do any more with Idols*.
 The covetous Man would have Christ and the World
 too; Christ satisfies his Conscience, and he flees
 him for that; the World satisfies his Heart, and he
 cleaves to it for that: But in the Day of gathering
 Power, the Emptiness of the World is discovered

and the Man sells all for the Pearl of great Price. The
 Man that comes to Christ, he comes for all these four
 Things, 1 Cor. i. 30. for *Wisdom, Righteousness, San-*
ctification, and Redemption; He comes to him as a
Prophet for Wisdom, as a *Priest* for Righteousness, as
King for Sanctification, and as his *All in all* for com-
 plete Redemption: And he can want none of these,
 because he knows his own Foolishness, Guiltiness, Fil-
 thiness, and Misery. The true Believer dares not di-
 vide Righteousness from Sanctification, nor Pardon
 from Purity; yea, he comes to Christ for Remission
 of Sin for the right End. What is that? Namely,
 that, being freed from the Guilt of Sin, he may be
 freed from the Dominion of it. Knowing that there
 is Forgiveness with him that he may be feared, he does
 not believe Remission of Sin that he may indulge him-
 self in the Commission of it: No, no; the Blood of
 Christ, that purges the Conscience from the Guilt of
 Sin, does also purge the Conscience from dead Works
 to serve the living God, *Heb. ix. 14.* They that come
 to Christ regularly then, they come so to him for Right-
 eousness, that they may have him also for Sanctifica-
 tion; otherwise the Man does not really desire the
 Favour and Enjoyment of God, or to be in Friendship
 with him who is a holy God. As the true Lover loves
 him, not only because he is good and merciful, but
 because he is a pure and holy JESUS; so the true
 Believer employs Christ for making him holy as well
 as happy; and hence draws Vertue from him for kil-
 ling of Sin, and quickning the Soul in the Way of
 Duty: And indeed the Faith that can never keep you
 from a Sin, will never keep you out of Hell; and the
 Faith that cannot carry you to a Duty, will not carry
 you to Heaven. Justifying Faith is a sanctifying Grace,
 it improves Christ undividedly. 'Tis true, as it san-
 ctifies it does not justify; but that Faith that justifies,
 does also sanctify: As the Sun that enlightens hath
 Heat with it, but it is not the Heat of the Sun that
 enlightens, but the Light thereof; so that Faith that
 justifies hath Love and Sanctity with it, but it is not
 the

the Love and Sanctity that justifies, but Faith as clo-
 sing with Christ. 7thly, When there is a Gathering
 of the People to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Ad-
 dress to him is made *exclusively*, excluding all other
 Saviours, all other Helps, all other Props, saying,
will make Mention of thy Righteousness, and of thine
only, Psal. lxxi. 16. To depend partly upon Christ
 and partly upon our own Righteousness, is to set one
 Foot upon firm Ground, and another upon Quick-
 sand. If a Man set one Foot upon a Rock, and ano-
 ther upon the deep Water, and lean to them both with
 equal Weight, yea, if he give any of his Weight to
 the Foot that is on the Water, he will be sure to sink
 into the Deep; so here: Therefore, in the Day of Ga-
 thering to Christ, the Soul is brought to say, *Surely*
in the Lord only have I Righteousness and Strength
 Isa. xlv. 24. Thus *Paul* excludes the best Righteous-
 ness that ever he had, either before or after Conversion
 from the Matter of his Justification, *Phil.* iii. 8, 9.
 When he compares his best Righteousness with Christ's
 he looks upon it as a Dunghil, a stinking Dunghil
 where there is no Pleasure, and a sinking Dunghil
 where there is no Standing. Such is our Righteous-
 ness, if it be not excluded from our Justification before
 God, and Acceptance with him. If we go about to
 establish our own Righteousness, it stinks in the Divine
 Nostrils as Dung: And not only so, but it is a sinking
 Ground to stand upon, there's no firm Footing; the
 more a Man leans to it, the more he sinks in it. Christ's
 Blood is the only Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Savour
 to God; every Sacrifice stinks, that is not perfumed
 therewith: Christ's Righteousness is the only sure
 Foundation and firm Ground for standing upon before
 God. As the Way of Sin is a sinking Way, so the
 Way of Self-righteousness is little better; for the Sin
 that is in Man's best Righteousness trips up his Heels
 and lays him in the Dirt, where he sinks to Hell, if
 he be not brought to build upon a surer Ground, and
 to take a better Way. 8thly, When there is a Gather-
 ing to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to
 him

him is made *progressively*, as also peremptorily and irreversibly, saying, as *Psal. lxxx. 17. Henceforth we will not go back.* O, after we have tasted the Bitterness of Sin, and the Bitterness of Wrath, after the Wings of our Souls have been singed with the Flames of Hell, after the Arrows of Conviction shot out of the Bow of Omnipotence have pierced our Souls, so as no Man, Minister or Angel, could pull them out; Christ did it with his own Hand, and therein manifested his powerful Grace, as being the Man of God's right Hand; Shall we again turn our Back upon him? No, henceforth thro' Grace we will not go back. The true Believer comes to Christ, so as never to part with him, saying, as *Ruth to Naomi, Ruth i. 16. Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: Thy People shall be my People, and thy God my God. Nothing shall part thee and me.* Yea, the Man, having once come to Christ, is ay coming nearer and nearer to him, *1 Pet. ii. 4. To whom coming as to a living Stone, ye are built up a spiritual House*; The Building goes up gradually, and is still going forward. Some Professors are like the Mill-wheel, it goes round, yet still it stands in in the same Place where it was: They go the Round of Duties, and Morning and Evening Prayers, and attend Sabbath and Week-days Sermons, which is well done; but they are at a Stand, they are the same now, that they were Ten, Twenty Years ago, if not worse. But, in gathering to *Shiloh*, the People are made to advance nearer and nearer to Heaven, getting more Knowledge, more Experience, more Hatred of Sin, more Love and Likeness to Christ. It is true, the Saints themselves have their Winter-decays, but they have also their Summer revivings that set them forward again. And thus *the Path of the Just is as the shining Light, which shineth more and more to a perfect Day.*

FIFTH HEAD.

The *Fifth* general Head proposed, was, To speak of the special Seasons, wherein this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* does take Place. When shall this Gathering be? Why, in general, when *Shiloh* is come, then shall the Gathering of the People be to him; And there are two remarkable Seasons of his Coming, that the Text intends, namely, his Coming in the *Flesh*, and his Coming in the *Spirit*. Now, his Coming in the *Flesh*, I spoke of in the Explication; and his Coming in the *Spirit*, I spoke of, when I shewed by what Means this Gathering is brought about: Particularly the gathering Wind of the *Spirit*, when he gathers the dead Sinners, as it were, out of their Graves; according to that Word, *Come from the four Winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live*, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Christ's Coming in the *Flesh* was the Beginning, and Commencement of the New Testament Dispensation, which is to last till his second Coming; and during the whole of that Dispensation, there will be a Gathering of the *Gentiles*, a Gathering of the People to him. Christ's Coming in the *Spirit*, is the very efficient Cause of all the spiritual and effectual Gatherings, that do take Place under that Dispensation; and therefore, his Coming in the *Spirit*, to convince the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment, is promised for that End, John xvi. 8. His Coming thus is like the gathering Shower spoken of, Psal lxxii. 6. *He shall come down like Rain upon the mown Grass, as Showers that water the Earth*; whereupon a Gathering ensues, Ver. 8. *His Kingdom shall be from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth. They that dwell in the Wilderness shall bow before him, and his Enemies shall lick the Dust. The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring Presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer Gifts; and all Nations shall serve him.* O cry for a gathering Shower of the *Spirit's* saving Influences and Operations; for there will be no Gathering till then.

then.] But more particularly, the gathering Seasons may be considered under a fourfold View. *1st.* With Relation to the publick and remarkable Gathering of the Church in general. *2dly.* With Relation to the initial Gathering of Sinners in particular. *3dly.* With Relation to the progressive Gathering of Believers. *4thly.* With Relation to the consummate Gathering of the Saints.

1st. The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the publick and remarkable Gathering of the Church in general. And, there are *four or five* seasons, that have been very remarkable, for publick and numerous Gatherings of the People to *Shiloh*. *1.* *Reforming Times*, in the Church, have been *Gathering Times*, under the powerful Influence of the Spirit of God accompanying Reformation-work, and leading forward thereunto. Thus was it in the Days of *Hezekiah*, when a Multitude, having destroyed the Altars of Idolatry, and *Hezekiah* having joined fervent Prayers with his reforming Measures, the Lordarkened to *Hezekiah*, and healed the People, *2 Chron.* *xx. 20.* Reforming Times have been remarkable gathering Times, in *Britain and Ireland*. The Lord brought Gospel-light very early, particularly into *Scotland*, by which our Fore-fathers were delivered from Heathenism and Paganism: And we wanted not some Gospel-light, for the Space of five hundred Years after Christ; About which Time, Popery came to put its Foot among us, when one *Palladius* was sent from *Rome* to corrupt us: And tho' there was a strenuous Opposition, for several hundred Years after that, against the *Romish* Rites and Hierarchy; yet *Poll* Darknells did gradually overspread these Lands, till it came to the greatest Height, in the Space of a thousand Years; after which Time, to wit, in the *fifteenth* century, I mean a thousand five hundred Years after Christ, which was the Reformation Period; and now, about two hundred Years ago, the Lord was pleased to make Reformation-Light to arise, by stirring up eminent Instruments to preach the Gospel clearly, and

to put to their Hands zealously to Reformation-work; especially in *Scotland*, even to the Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism, and the solemn Renunciation thereof, and of all heretical and Sectarian Errors, whether in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline or Government. Then it was, that Ministers were clothed with Righteousness and Salvation, and were eminent in their Faithfulness to God, in his Truth and Interests, and zealous against Sin, and all Lukewarmness in the Lord's Cause: Then it was, that the Representative Body of the Nation put to their Hand for the Reformation thereof: Then it was, that *Scotland* particularly was famed thro' the World, under the Name of *PHILADELPHIA*; because of the Purity of its Reformation, having left all the Rags of Popery behind it in the Grave, from whence it arose; which could not be said of many other Churches, particularly of our Neighbour Church of *England*: For as *Lazarus* came out of the Grave, bound Hand and Foot, and his Face bound about with a Napkin, so was it with *England* in their first Reformation. It was indeed like a Resurrection from the Grave, in the Days of King *Edward* and Queen *Elizabeth*; but yet they came out of this Grave, bound Hand and Foot with their Grave-clothes, bringing many Things out with them, which they should have left behind, especially all these Ceremonies, Superstitions, and Modes of Worship and Government, wherein they symbolize with the Church of *Rome*, and which they brought along with them, when they left her: These Grave-Clothes they have not cast off to this Day. And alas! many in *Scotland* are fond of borrowing from them some of their old Garments, which smell of the Prison of Popery, which they left. But with Respect to *Scotland's* Reformation-Days, as Christ, when he arose from the Dead, left all his Linens and Grave-clothes behind him; so he helped *Scotland*, in rising out of the Grave of Popery, to rise and reform so purely, as to leave all the Rags of Popery, to be buried in the Grave from whence they arose. And then

these Days it was, that the Work of the Lord prospered, the Gospel flourished, Iniquity was made to stop its Mouth ; our Church was glorious to all Beholders, and terrible to her Enemies, as an Army with Banners, and Multitudes of People where gathered to *Shiloh*. But, alas ! one of the great Reasons, why there are so few gathering to *Shiloh* now, is too plainly this, that Reformation-work is much at a Stand, little Reformation Zeal and Spirit among Magistrates, Ministers, or People, as it is said, *Neb. iii. 5. The Nobles of Techoah did not put their Necks to the Work of the Lord* : Yea, Deformity, Dehlement, Corruption and Defection, instead of Reformation, is too palpable in our Day, wherein many Pollutions have crept into our Doctrine, much Defilement into our Worship, Partiality and Pithlesness into our Discipline, and Tyranny and Disorder in the Church-Government ; manifold Incroachments made upon the Liberties of the Lord's People, and the Privileges of the Lord's House, too well known that we need to mention them all ; infomuch that the very Foundations are ready to shake, and the Garden is much grown over with Weeds. O cry for the Return of Reformation days ; for till then, there is but little Hope of remarkable Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* : And as Christ commanded his Disciples to unbind *Lazarus*, when he was raised out of the Grave, and to take away his Grave-clothes ; so seek the Lord may come, and take away whatever is opposite to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of his House, and to the perfecting of the Work of Reformation, and whatever tends to hinder it. But again, (2.) *Covenanting Times* in the Church, have been gathering Times, as you may see in the Time of *Josiah*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 3. when the People made a Covenant, to walk after the Lord, with all their Heart and Soul, and all the People stood to the Covenant. Thus it was with these Lands, when, after the Reformation, all Ranks were brought into holy and solemn Covenants with God : In those Days the Lord delighted in us, and our Land

Land was married to him; when, with uplifted Hands, we swore Allegiance to him, and abjured all Rivals with him in his Government: Never a Nation was more solemnly bound to the Lord by national Covenants, in the 15th Century, the 80th and 81st Years thereof; and renewed again and again in the 16th Century, the 38th and 39th Years thereof, and in latter Times also, together with the *Solemn-League* afterwards, for furthering the Ends, Designs and Obligations of the former. I know indeed some dispute, and deny the Obligation of these Covenants upon Posterity: But as good *Josiah* brought back the People, and caused them to stand to the Covenant of their Fathers, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 32. so we find, that religious Covenants in Scripture comprehend absent, as well as present, and Posterity to come, as well as the covenanting Fore-fathers, *Deut.* xxix. 14, 15, 22, 24, 25. Now, our solemn Covenants, that our Fore-fathers entred into, being Nothing but a superadded, and accumulative Obligation, to what we were previously bound to by the Word of God, they cannot but stand binding upon us their Posterity. But as these covenanting Days were Gathering Days, wherein many flocked into *Shiloh*, and wherein God appended his Seal to the covenanted Work of Reformation, by a numerous Accession of Souls to the *Messias*, under the Influence of the powerful Spirit of God, blessing his Word and Ordinances to their Conversion; so our Covenant-breaking Days, on the other Hand, are far from being gathering Days. Little Wonder, when we have Occasion to lament, that our Covenant hath been broken, and burnt, and buried; and, if our Covenant-breaking be not duly lamented, and covenanted Reformation revived, we have Ground to expect the Lord will send a Sword, a dreadful Judgment, to avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant. Till there be a remarkable Reviving hereof, we can hardly expect a remarkable Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. (3.) *Confessing Times*, in the Church, have been gathering Times; Times of humble acknowledging of personal and national

nal Guilt, as you see, *Ezra* viii. 23. & ix. 7. and
 downwards, compared with *Chap.* x. 1, 2, 3. No
 Doubt, there were better Days of the Gospel, in Re-
 spect of the Power thereof, with us than now,
 when there was a publick and solemn Acknowledg-
 ment of publick Sins, and Breaches of Covenant;
 such as you have an Account of in the ordinary *Con-*
fessions of Faith among your Hands. But in our Days,
 we seem to be so far from taking with our publick Sins
 and Defections, that we are rather upon the Self-ju-
 stifying Lay, as if we had done nothing amiss, and as
 if Matters had never been better with us. May we
 not hereupon conclude, that the Lord is speaking to
 us, as he did of old to *Judah*, *Jer.* ii. 34, 35. *Behold*
I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have
not sinned? While our Mother-Church is not duly
 taking with her Sin, how can we expect a remarkable
 Gathering of her Children to *Shiloh*? Whereas, if our
 uncircumcised Hearts were humbled, and that we
 were confessing our Iniquities, and the Iniquities of
 our Fathers, then we might expect the Lord would
 yet remember his Covenant, and heal our Land, as it
 is, *Lev.* xxvi. 40, 41, 42. Not that publick Reform-
 ings, Covenantings and Confessions have any meritori-
 ous Influence upon, or are procuring Causes of re-
 markable Gatherings unto *Shiloh*; only in this Method
 and Order he uses to work, preparing the Way of the
 People, *Isa.* lvii. 14. & lxii. 10. He gathers out the
 Stones, lifts up a Standard for the People, and then
 follows the Gathering of the People to him: There-
 fore, while none of these National Revivings, or pu-
 blick Acknowledgments of our own and our Forefathers
 Iniquities, appear; little Wonder, that, instead of a
 Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, we see Clouds ga-
 thering in our Sky, and more and more National Bon-
 dage and Thralldom taking Place. We walk contrary
 to God, and God walks contrary to us, and will punish
 us even times more for our Iniquities. Therefore, if
 you would wish for a remarkable Gathering, O cry
 for a remarkable Outpouring of the Spirit of Repen-
 tance

tance and Reformation, whereof there is so little to be seen in Church or State in our Day. O seek for a Return of his departed Glory, and that our Land may not be called *Lo-ammi* and *Lo-rubamah*, as it is said, *Hof. i.* but rather *Ammi* and *Rubamah*, *Hof. ii.* and that we may be called *Hephzibah* and *Beulah*, *Isa. lxi.* 4. that the Lord may yet delight in us, and our Land may yet again be married. But, (4.) *Suffering and Contending Times* in the Church have been remarkable gathering Times. It was in Time of Persecution and Suffering of the Church, that such great Numbers of People were converted and gathered in to Christ in the primitive Ages, as you see, *Acts iv. 4.* Times of Contending for the Faith have been Times of Conveining to Christ the glorious Object of Faith: Years of scattering Times have been gathering Times, when the Lord hath scattered his Servants abroad, that, by the Preaching of the Word in every Airth to which they were scattered, there might be a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, as you see it was, *Acts viii.* and particularly *Acts xi. 19, 20, 21.* Thus the Jewish Persecution first, and then the primitive Pagan Persecutions next; especially the second under *Domitian* which was about the 69th Year of Christ; and the 9th and 10th under *Aurelius* and *Dioclesian*, as Historians relate, were the very Means of bringing the Gospel first to *Scotland*, while eminent Men fled from these dreadful Tempests unto this Land, and so planted the Gospel here. Suffering Times, persecuting Times, and hiding Times, have been gathering Times in the Church. Some old Persons here, perhaps, have been Witnesses to Days of Power in the Time of Persecution, in the late suffering Times in *Scotland*. Our Fathers have told us, how the Lord appeared for them and with them, when Men were appearing most boldly against them: They have heard the best News from Heaven, when they heard the worst from Earth. God many Times smiles most upon his Church, when the World frowns most against them: When the Calumnies and Truths of Christ are most opposed by Men, God

usually puts the most remarkable Seal to them upon the Hearts of many. Some can say, When they were contending most for the Truth, then the Lord hath made the Truth most sweet and refreshful to themselves, and most powerful and efficacious to others. Even a Time of Bonds hath been a Time of begetting Children to God ; *Mind Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my Bonds*, says *Paul*, in the 10th Verse of his Epistle to *Philemon*. Indeed, the Lord's gathering Time is not confined to suffering Periods of the Church ; for *glorious Things are spoken of Zion the City of God*, even at other Times, *that this Man and that Man was born there* ; and I know that it can be said of our Zion, without looking many Years back, that this Man and that Man, this Woman and that Woman was born there. But I speak of remarkable Gatherings, where it can be said, not only this Man and that Man, but this Multitude and that Multitude was born there : And O for a Time of the Gathering of Multitudes to Christ ! Perhaps sad and suffering Days must come again before we have such gathering Days, and there may be terrible Sufferings before there be remarkable Gatherings ; for he whose Fan is in his Hand, *Mat. iii. 12.* does usually purge his Floor before he gather in his Wheat. But as the Day of Calamity in itself is not to be desired ; so, that we may not be hopeless in the mean Time, I would further tell you, that the Church's backsliding Times have been God's gathering Times, according to *Jer. iii. 14.* *Turn, O backsliding Children, says the Lord, for I am married unto you ; and I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and bring you to Zion.* There is a Call in a backsliding Time ; but see *ver. 22.* where there is not only a gathering Call, but a gathering Power accompanying the Call, even at a Time wherein they had perverted their Ways, and forgotten the Lord their God : *Return, ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings ;* and then it follows, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Behold a Gathering of the People

unto *Shiloh* in a backsliding Time ! O then, let backsliding *Scotland* say, Behold we come ! O let backsliding Sinners say, Behold we come ! O that the Hearts of Hearers were saying, Behold we come ! O there is no national Reformation can take Place till there be personal Reformation : If personal Returning to the Lord were general and universal, then there would be a national Returning. Therefore, if you would wish to see a national Reviving, let every Person put in for a Share of gathering Power and Grace, saying, *Turn me, and I shall be turned ; Draw me, and I shall run :* And, under the Conduct of drawing Power, let us say, *Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Hath your personal Backsliding, Man, Woman, been great and grievous ? Hath this been your Disease all your Days. a backsliding Heart, a backsliding Nature, a backsliding Practice, a Bentness to Backsliding in Thought, Word and Action ? Is that your Disease, that you're a backsliding Heifer, a backsliding Devil, that, it may be, thinks the Disease is desperate and incurable ? O let me assure you that there is a Healer come here to Day, that says, *I will heal your Backslidings ;* and he will not say the Thing that he cannot do. And while his Mercy is saying, *I will heal your Backslidings,* let your Heart be saying, Lord, I'll come to thee for that Healing, for that is my Disease, and there is none in the World needs it so much as I : The Church and Nation need to have their Backslidings healed ; but I am the particular Person that needs it most of all : Heal me, and I shall be healed ; Behold, I come to thee for that End. Is your Heart saying so ? Then welcome be all Comers ; welcome, welcome, welcome ; *Him that comes, I will in nowise cast out.* Nay, he will in nowise cast up your former Backslidings, but heal you, without upbraiding you ; for *he gives liberally, and upbraids not. I will heal your Backslidings :* It is spoken without Limitation, either of former or future Backslidings ; and therefore the Fear of backsliding again, needs not discourage you from coming to him ; your former Backslidings will

not cast you out: And tho' you backslide again, yet
 he will not cast you off; *He may visit your Iniquity
 with the Rod, but his Loving-kindness will be not
 take away:* No, he will in nowise cast you out. Back-
 slidings shall never part him and you, for he will heal
 your Backslidings; *I will heal your Backslidings.* It
 hath a Respect to the future, as well as the present
 Time; not to encourage your Sinning for the future,
 no, no; but to encourage Sinners to come, notwith-
 standing of their Fears of future Fallings: This shall
 be my Office and Employment, so long as you labour
 under that Disease of Backsliding, which will be till
 you come to *that Land, where the Inhabitants shall
 say, I am sick:* Now, till you come there, I'll ay
 be a Physician and Healer to you, to give you my
 healing Word, my healing Blood, my healing Visits
 from Time to Time, and to arise like the Sun of Right-
 eousness with Healing under my Wings from Day to
 Day: Therefore come, backsliding Soul, and let
 me have all your Employment from Day to
 Day. O is your Heart saying, *Behold we come!*
 Then, blessed be the Comers, tho' they have been
 Backsliders. The People, that must be gathered to
Shiloh, are a backsliding People; and if it were not
 such, it would be none of *Adam's* Race, for they are
 all smitten with the same Disease; therefore all the
 Backsliders here are invited to be Comers. Come and
 welcome in the Name of *Shiloh*, to whom the Gather-
 ing must be; and in his Blessed Father's Name, come
 and welcome. And if there be any Comers here, then
 Glory, Glory to God, that, notwithstanding all that
 is amiss in the Church of *Scotland*, yet it is a gather-
 ing Time; notwithstanding all our Backslidings, yet
 it is a gathering Season. Thus I have considered the
 gathering Seasons with relation to the remarkable Ga-
 therings of the Church in general.

2dly, The gathering Seasons may be considered, with
 relation to the *initial* Gathering of Sinners in particular;
 when he begins to gather in Sinners to himself, O the
 Freedom and Sovereignty of his Grace, that shines

in the Seasons and Times of Gathering! for some he gathers at the third Hour, *Matth. xx. 3.* some at the sixth Hour, and some at the ninth Hour, *Ver. 5.* yea some at the eleventh Hour, *Ver. 6.* There are four Periods and Seasons mentioned; for he gathers some in the Morning, some in the Evening, some at Mid-day, and some at Midnight; whatever be the Hour, it is an happy Hour: *The Hour comes, when the Dead shall hear*; and O may this be the happy Hour, with Respect to some here! More particular, 1st, The Morning is the gathering Season, with Respect to some: I mean the Morning of their Youth: The Lord hath gathered some very early in the Morning, before Break of Day, before ever they saw the Light of Day; for some are gathered before they be born, sealed and sanctified from the Womb, as well as fore-known from Eternity. *Jer. i. 5. Before I formed thee in the Belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the Womb, I sanctified thee*; which some have applied to Regeneration, that some are spiritually born, before ever they are naturally so. We are sure that Infants are as capable of all the Essentials of Regeneration, as adult Persons are. The essential Part thereof, is, *God's putting his Spirit within them*; and Infants are as capable of this as aged Persons, if not more, while natural Enmity is not strengthened by actual Rebellions. But this I pass, as more rare, and what cannot be known, but by some remarkable Effects thereof. It is not so rarely that some are gathered in the Morning of their younger Years; so was it with *Josias*, who was called at eight Years old, *2 Kings xxii. 1, 2.* so was it with young *Timothy*, who *knew the holy Scriptures from a Child*, *2 Tim. iii. 15.* And, if the Morning of Youth be a gathering Season unto *Shiloh*, let this encourage young Children, that are here, to remember their Creator and Redeemer, in the Days of their Youth; O remember to seek him early: *I love them that love me*, says God, *and they that seek me early shall find me.* See also *Psal. cx. 3.* 2^{dly}, The Evening is the gathering Season, with Re-

spect to some: God gathers some in the Evening of
 their old Age. Thus we find *Abraham* was gathered
 in his old Age; he was 75 Years old, when God first
 called him, *Gen. xii. 4.* and it is probable, that *Nicodem-*
as was an old Man, before he was born again, as ap-
 pears from *John iii. 4.* Is there any old Sinner here,
 that hath been a Transgressor from the Womb, and
 been living without Christ all your Days? O, it is
 more than Time you were gathered in to *Shiloh*. O
 hath the Devil got the Morning, and the Noontide
 of your Day, and will you give him the Evening too?
 O he hath got too much of your Time already; let
 Christ have the rest, if he can have no more. I dare
 not say, that he will not take what the Devil hath left;
 for I have no Warrant from the Word, to say, That
 old Age cannot be God's gathering Time: I am sure
 my Text excludes neither Old nor Young, *To him shall*
the Gathering of the People be; therefore let even old
 and dying People gather in to the new and living
 Way, which is consecrated for us, thro' the Vail of the
 Mediator's Flesh: Sure it is the best Way, that you
 can take, before you be gathered into a Grave. 3dly,
 The Mid-day is God's gathering Season, with Re-
 spect to some: I mean the middle Time of their Age;
 and, whom God gathers, he most ordinarily gathers
 about the Midst of their Days. Some have judged,
 that God's Remnant are most ordinarily gathered in,
 betwixt the Years of 15 and 25. others, between 14
 and 40. But I dare not limit the holy One of *Israel*;
 only, seeing the most Part here are, perhaps, such as
 are about the Midst of their Day, O look to God,
 to hallow the Middle of your Days, as *Solomon* hal-
 lowed the Middle of the Court, *2 Chron. vii. 7.* And
 when God says of the *Messias*, *To him shall the Gather-*
ing of the People be; let all the People say, *Amen*.
 Ye that are young, ye that are old, and ye that are be-
 twixt the two, O say, *Amen*, let gathering Power
 come. 4thly, The Midnight is a gathering Season,
 with Respect to some: I mean not only a midnight
 Time of Death and approaching Eternity, at which

Sea-

Season God hath gathered some, as he did the Thief on the Cross, tho' it is not his ordinary Time; but also a Midnight-State of Security, when the Soul is in a dead Sleep, even such a Time hath been a gathering Time. I need not insist here on *Manasseh*, *Mary Magdalene*, and others: When did the Day of Grace dawn upon *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*? even when it was the darkest Hour in the Night, when he was sleeping most sound in the Bed of Security. It is true his Body was not sleeping, for he was riding furiously to *Damascus*; but his Soul was so far asleep, that he was snorting and breathing very high in his Sleep, *Acts ix. 1.* He was breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord: Behold, even at Midnight there came a Cry from Heaven, that awakened him, and roused him to seek Jesus. Now it is, perhaps, a Midnight-time with some here; they are sleeping and breathing in their Sleep, breathing out Enmity against God, and the People of God and the Way of God; but a midnight Time may be a gathering Time, as it is said, *Matth. xxv. 6.* when all the Virgins, wise and foolish, were slumbering and sleeping, that at Midnight there came a Cry, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*; so tho' it be Midnight with the Church, and Midnight with poor miserable secure Souls; yet at Midnight there is a Cry in this Gospel, Behold *Shiloh* is come, and let the Gathering of the People be to him; go forth and meet him; for, behold he comes with Salvation. There is the initial Gathering.

3dly, The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the *progressive* Gathering of Believers, in whom the good Work is begun, and who have either now, or at some former Time, been engaged to come to *Shiloh*; yet they need to be still coming to him, and still gathering under his Wings. Now, many are the gathering Seasons, that relate to the Believer's *progressive* Gathering, and Advances in Nearness to, and Communion with the Lord. I shall consider them, for Distinction and Memory's Sake, in these four

four Periods; namely, of Summer, Winter, Spring, and Harvest. And, (1.) There are *Summer-Times* of Refreshment, that Believers sometimes have immediately after the gathering Harvest of Conversion; and these Summer-times are further gathering Times, and contribute to their progressive *Gathering*. When the Soul hath been long under Guilt and Wrath, and under the Frowns and Displeasure of God, and had long seen the Gates of Heaven barred against him, and the Mouth of Hell open to receive him; then readily the Lord comes in, and speaks Peace to the Soul, saying, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine Iniquity, for my Name's sake*. Hearken, Soul, my Thoughts towards you are Thoughts of Peace; here is Mercy to pardon thee, Merit to justify thee, Blood to wash thee, Balm to heal thee, Bread to nourish thee, Wine to cherish thee, Raiment to clothe thee. Thus after Paul was awakened, and convinced, and gathered, then God takes him up to the third Heaven, and makes such Manifestations of his Love and Favour, Beauty and Glory, as he is not able to utter. Thus, after the Prodigal's Return, the fatted Calf is killed, the best Robe is put upon his Back, and the Ring is put upon his Hand, and Shoes on his Feet, shewing us, that upon the Sinner's Conversion, and Gathering in to *Shiloh*, God is graciously pleased to give him some choice and signal Manifestation of his Love and Favour, Grace and Glory, and these contribute to his progressive *Gathering*, *John ii. 11. He manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him*. Hence, *Psal. cii. 16.* when he builds up *Zion*, he appears in his Glory; when the Stones that are already gathered, and laid upon the Foundation, are to be built up a spiritual House, in a progressive Work, he discovers his Glory, that, beholding his Glory, they may be changed from Glory to Glory: But the Summer-Time of spiritual Prosperity may be but a short Time, as *David's, Psal. xxx. 6, 7.* tho' it ordinarily recurs to them in some Measure, even as Summer does Year by Year; yet it is frequently followed with a Winter. Therefore,

(2.) There

(2.) There are *Winter-Times* of Adversity, which Believers have, which yet may be God's *gathering Times*, for making Way for their progressive *Gathering* to *Shiloh*. And thus, 1st, A *Winter-Time* of personal Affliction does sometimes make Way, for their further *Gathering*: *It was good for me that I was afflicted, for before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I learned thy Law*! He had been straying, but now a *Gathering* again was the Fruit of his Affliction, according to *Hos. v. 15. In their Affliction they shall seek me early*; their afflicting Time shall be a gathering Time, for bringing them nearer to the Lord; hence they have been made to rejoice in the Lord, tho' the Fig-tree should not blossom, and to glory in Tribulation. As the Ark was lifted up nearer and nearer Heaven, by the Rising of the Waves; so, by Affliction, Believers are raised nearer and nearer to God in Christ. 2^{dly}, The *Winter-Time* of fore Trial hath sometimes been a gathering Time to them; gathering Mercy prevents them sometimes before an eminent Trial, to prepare them for it. Thus it was with *Elijah*; Arise and eat, for thou hast a Journey before thee, and the Journey is too great, *1 Kings xix. 7. And he went in the Strength of that Meat forty Days and forty Nights, till he came to Horeb the Mount of God*. Sometimes gathering Mercy supports them in the Trial, and under it, saying, *Fear not, for I am with thee, I will strengthen thee; when thou goest through the Fire, &c.* Thus many Times the Son of Man is with them in the Furnace, gathering them in his Arms, as he was with *John* in the Isle of *Patmos*, with *Ezekiel* by the River *Chebar*, with *David* in the Wilderness of *Judea*, and with the three Children in the Furnace of Fire. Again, 3^{dly}, The *Winter-Time* of *Temptation* is sometimes a gathering Time unto them; as, after *Paul* was buffeted by Satan, he heard that sweet Word, *My Grace shall be sufficient for thee, &c.* Yea, after the sharpest Conflict, he usually gives the strongest Cordial, for gathering their Spirits again, *Psal. xciv. 19. In the*

Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul. 4thly, The Winter-Time of *Desertion* and *Hiding*, hath been sometimes a gathering Season: Let not the deserted Soul be too much disquieted, the Valley of *Achor* may be a Door of Hope; you may have Occasion to say, as *Psal. cxvi. 6. I was brought low, and he helped me*; you may be brought to the Brink of Despair, that you may have Occasion to say, as *Psal. xl. at the Beginning, He brought me out of the horrible Pit, &c.* When *Jacob* was in great Distress, God met with him at *Bethel*, *Gen. xxviii.* and when, *Gen. xxxii.* he was in great Fear that God would not accomplish his Promise, he was prevented by another Visit; and it was the most remarkable Night that ever he had: He calls the Place *Peniel*; for he saw God Face to Face, and he had told him before what he had been, and would be to him, saying, *I am the God of Bethel.* 5thly, The Winter of *Down-casting* hath been a Time of Reviving, *Psal. xlii. 6. O my God, my Soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember thee from the Land of Jordan, &c.* And, *Deep calleth unto Deep, at the Noise of thy Water-Spouts; all thy Waves and thy Billows have gone over me: Yet the Lord will command his loving Kindness in the Day-Time, and in the Night his Songs shall be with me, and my Prayer to the God of my Life.* Thus he gives Songs in the Night, in so much that the darkest Night hath ushered in the clearest Light, according to that Promise, *Zech. xiv. 7. It shall come to pass that at the Evening-Time it shall be Light.* 6thly, Again the Winter-Time of *Outcasting* hath been a gathering Time; for he gathers the *Outcasts of Israel*, *Isa. lvi. 8. I said, I am cast out of thy Sight, Jonah ii. iv. yet will I look again to thy holy Temple: There, you see, was a gathering Time by Faith unto Christ, when he was cast out into the very Belly of Hell, as it is called, V. 2. You, whose Name is a Cast-out, may then expect that your Name may be turned to a Sought-out, Isa. lxii. last.* 7thly, The Winter-Time of *Fears*, *What Time I am afraid, I*

will trust in thee; Fear not, for I am with, &c. The Time of Hopefulness and Helplessness hath been a Time of spiritual Gathering to the People of God; *Psal. cxlii. 4, 5. I looked on my Right-hand, and beheld; but there was no Man that would know me, all Refuge failed me: Then I cried to thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my Refuge, and my Portion in the Land of the Living:* When their Hope is perished, and Nothing but the Sentence of Death passing, then the Lord hath been gathering, *2 Cor. i. 9. We had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the Dead.* Yea, when the Soul hath not only been sentenced, but slain in a Manner, and laid in the Grave, then hath it been a Time of Gathering, *Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. Our Bones are dried,* says the Church, *our Hope is lost, we are cut off for our Parts:* But, behold, saith the Lord, *I will open your Graves, and cause you to come up, and I will put my Spirit in you, and you shall live.* 8thly, Yea, a Winter-Time of Sinning, and Declining, and Departing from the Lord, hath been a Time of Gathering of his People; and this is most wonderful of all, as I said before of a backsliding Time: O that is a strange Word, *Isa. xliii. 23, 24, 25. Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, and wearied me with thine Iniquity: Yet I, even I am he, that blotteth out thine Iniquities for my Name's Sake.* There is one of the bitterest Challenges for Sin, and that backed with one of the sweetest Promises of Pardon and Pity, and of gathering and restoring Mercy: Will this encourage a Believer to sin, because the Time of your Falling-down may be a Time of God's Gathering-up? O no; Nothing will humble and melt the Believer's Heart for Sin more, than to think of the Riches of Divine Mercy, and Sovereign Grace: When he stoops down to gather you out of the Dirt, that you fall into, and recovers your Soul and your Graces. Some tell us that Musk, when it hath lost its Sinell and Sweetness, if it be put into a Sink among Filth, it recovers it; so when the Believer's

Graces

Graces have lost their Flavour and savoury Exercise, the Lord, in a Manner, lets them fall into the Dirt, that their decaying Graces may be recovered and revived. Thus *Peter* was suffered to fall into the Dirt of dreadful Sinning, and then his Graces were revived, his Humility revived, he was humbled to the Dust; his Repentance was revived, he went out and wept bitterly; his spiritual Remembrance was revived, for he remembered the Words of Christ to him; and all flowed from this, that it was even Christ's gathering Time; for while he was yet among the Dung, into which he fell, Christ looks upon *Peter*, with a gracious gathering Eye, *Luke* xxii. 61, 62. Let the Believer then, for the Upstirring and Encouragement of his Faith, know, that his saddest Winter-Time may be God's gathering Time to draw, and should be his gathering Time to turn to *Shiloh*. Your halting Time may be his gathering Time: When your creeple Feet make you go halting in the Way of the Lord, *Mic.* iv. 6. *I will assemble her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out.* Your falling Time may be his raising and up-gathering Time, your perishing Time may be his saving Time; for his Thoughts are not your Thoughts, &c. And his taking such a Time, makes his Interposul at such a Juncture the more wonderful, and the more welcome. But now, as, in these Instances, God is pleased to glorify his Sovereignty, and shew that he does not ty himself to Means, in these progressive Gatherings of Believers, any more than he did in the initial Gathering of Unbelievers to himself; so to glorify his Holiness, and to put Honour upon the Means of his own Appointment, you would know also, that,

(3.) There are *Spring-times* of spiritual Duty and Gospel-diligence, which Believers have, which are also God's gathering Times, with respect to their progressive Gathering to *Shiloh* (By the By, neglect not Means, on Pretence that Grace must do all; it were an ill Argument, Water only refreshes, therefore cut off all Cocks and Pipes) But to return, such a Spring-

time as this you read of *Song ii. 10, 11, 12, 13.* *My Beloved spake, &c. For lo, the Winter is past, the Flowers appear—Arise, my Love, my fair One, and come away.* Why, it is a gathering Time, therefore come away. Now, what are these Fruits and Flowers that appear in the spiritual Spring-time, which prognosticates a gathering Time to be at Hand, yea, that it is a gathering Time at present? There are several Fruits of the Spirit, that appear in the Gospel Spring-time, which betoken a gathering Time; As, 1. A Believing Time is a gathering Time; Faith is one of the Fruits and Flowers that appear in this Spring. A believing Time is so much a gathering Time, that God's Gathering, is his giving Faith; and our Gathering, is our exercising Faith. But a believing Time is also a prognosticating Time, betokening a further progressive Gathering, so as to be brought to more and more Nearness to the Lord Jesus: Hence believing Times are glorious Times; *Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the Glory of God?* John xi. 40. When God's Children are in the Exercise of Faith, then the Lord is pleased to make known his Goodness. Believing Times are sealing Times, *Eph. i. 13. In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of Promise.* Believing Times are rejoicing Times, *1 Pet. i. 8. In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice, &c.* There is Joy and Peace in Believing. Faith ordinarily brings in Sense; spiritual Sense and Feeling is the Fruit of Faith: Tho', by the By, I must tell you what is the Fault and Folly of the most Part even of Believers themselves, from whence it flows that they feel so little of the sweet Fruits and Advantages of Faith, they make Sense and Feeling the Root and Ground of Faith, whereas it is only the Fruit and Effect of Faith. But know, that when Sense is made the Support of Faith, it frequently leaves Faith in the Mire; for when Sense, which they made the Ground of their Faith, fails, then their Faith fails with it. The only sure Ground of Faith is God's

Word, his Truth; his Faithfulness, which is an unchangeable Ground. Now, if you make God's Work upon you, such as spiritual Sense, Graces, Experience, or the like, the Ground of your Faith, you'll find these to be such changeable Grounds, so much up and down, that your Faith must be up and down with them, and you will totter sooner than you're aware: Or, if you build your Faith partly upon Sense, Feelings, &c. and partly upon God's Truth, you're then like a Man that sets one Foot upon a firm Ground, and the other upon a floating Board; when the loose floating Board fails or slips, you will hardly stand fast, however firm the other Foot stands. Who among all ordinary Believers knows not the Ebbings and Flowings, the Ups and Downs of Frames and spiritual Feelings? They may rise and fall ten Times in an Hour, as the Wind blows. Now, if your Faith be built upon these Love-tokens, and depend upon them; then, as your Faith must be very wavering, so God, seeing himself robbed of the Dependence due to him, may purposely withhold these Things from you, that you may learn not to trust in uncertain Experiences, but on the living God. Why, say you, when I get these Love-tokens, it is not upon these that I trust, but on the God that sent them. Well done, if it be true: But I fear it is otherwise; for if Christ himself and his Truths be the Ground of your Faith, when you get these Love-tokens, then how comes it, that when these Love-tokens are gone, and when Sense and Feeling is gone, your Faith is to seek? I trow, when Feeling is up, then your Faith is up; and when Feeling is down, your Faith is down. Now, if the whole Building of your Faith were upon the unchangeable Rock, you would see no more Cause of Doubting when the changeable Feeling is gone, than when it is present; and therefore, I fear it be your Fault, Believer, as well as mine, that many Times we lay too much Weight upon that thawing Ice, and make Sense and Feeling the Ground of our Faith. But if God make you a Believer at all, Man, he will bring you off gradually from this Evil; and

and if you never believe till you get spiritual Sense, you will never be a Believer; for Feeling follows Believing, and therefore Believing must be before Feeling. To build Faith upon Sense then, is like a Man setting up the Couples of a House, and then beginning at the Rigging or Roof of the House, and building it downward, such a House can never be built. This is one Lesson by the By, which tho' we should tell you it Twenty Times, we will need to tell it over again; however, I say it is a believing Time that is a gathering Time, for Faith hath Influence upon all other Graces: It is like a Silver Threed, that runs through a Chain of Pearls: It puts Strength and Vivacity into all other Virtues: It applies and appropriates all to itself, even God, and Christ, and the Promises, and all: It is like the Spring of the Watch, that sets all the Golden Wheels of Love, Joy, Comfort and Peace agoing; for it sees in Christ's Righteousness a Fulness, a Glory that fills the Heart with glorious Joy. Christ is the Centre of Faith, and therefore a believing Time is a Time of gathering to *Shiloh*. But lest any say, O, I do not find it a believing Time with me; therefore,

2. A *Repenting Time* is a gathering Time, and Repentance is one of the Fruits that appears in this Spring-Time that I speak of; and Gospel-Repentance natively springs from Faith, for, in short, it is a Turning from Sin to God through Christ by Faith; and surely where there is no such Turning from Sin, there is no Gathering to *Shiloh*, *Isa. lv. 7*. There you see this Gospel Repentance described, in the several Parts that I have mentioned. 1st, It is a Turning from Sin; therefore it is said, *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts*: All Sins of Heart and Way, Thought, Word or Action. 2^{dly}, It is a Turning from Sin to God; therefore it is said, *Let him return to the Lord*: There is the End. 3^{dly}, It is a Returning from Sin to God through Christ; therefore it is said, *Let him return to the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon*: And so it is a merciful Sin-pardoning

God, that is, a God in Christ, in whom alone God is reconciled, and well pleased : And without this Apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ, there can be no kindly Repentance. Therefore, 4thly, It is a Returning from Sin to God through Christ, by Faith : Hence it is said, *Let him return, for he will abundantly pardon.* Faith looks to this FOR, this Motive of Returning ; Faith views the Motive, and so influences the Return. As it is a good FOR, so it is a good TURN that is influenced thereby ; and as the Motive to an Action is viewed, before the Act be executed, so here the Motive, tho' the last Thing in the Expression, yet is the first Thing viewed by Faith. O, is there Mercy with him for the like of me, and Pardon, yea, abundant Pardon, great Pardon for my great Sins, multiplied Pardon for my multiplied Sins ! O this Kindness of God melts the Heart, this Goodness of God leads to Repentance ; and so the Faith of God's Favour and Mercy in Christ, influences this Gospel Repentance. And indeed the whole Progress of the Believer, in this continued progressive Gathering to *Shiloh*, is intermixed with this penitent Disposition ; He cannot cease Repenting, till he hath ceased Sinning, and consequently till he hath ceased Living : And his most joyful Days of Communion with God, on Earth, are still attended with the joyful Tears of Repentance ; and he sows in Tears, till he reap in Joy. He never comes to Christ, by any lively Act of Faith, but, at the same Time, with *Mary*, he washes his Feet with his Tears, in a Manner, and wipes them with the Hair of his Head. But in case any should think their Faith and Repentance is to seek, therefore it is a gathering Time with them ; Why then, 3. A *Praying* Time is and bodes a Gathering Time : I speak of the Prayer of Faith, *Dan. ix. 20.* while *Daniel* was praying, and confessing his own Sins, and the Sins of his People, the Lord appeared to him, and gives him a Divine Touch, and tells him, That he is a greatly beloved : Of this we have the Instance of *Emmanuel*, also, *Ab. 10.* at the Beginning. God loves to

to load the Wings of Prayer with the choicest and chiefest Blessings, the best and sweetest Flowers of Paradise. God gives to his People, when they are upon their Knees. Thus many have found praying Times to be sealing Times, wherein the Lord hath been pleased graciously to lift up the Light of his Countenance upon them. After much Praying, Weeping and Wrestling, God usually comes, with his Hand and his Heart full of Mercy to his People; he loves not to come empty Handed to these that have sitten long begging at Mercy's Door. But because some poor Soul may think, either they cannot pray, or they have been long praying, and yet have not come Speed; Therefore, 4. A Waiting Time speaks forth a Gathering Time, *Hab. ii. 3. The Vision is for an appointed Time, at the End it will speak, and not lie; tho' it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* God never did nor will fail the the praying and waiting Soul, for they that wait on him shall not be ashamed, *Isa. xlix. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me: Yea. Isa. xl. Last. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their Strength, they shall mount up, &c.* Therefore we are to wait for him, as the Husband-Man waits for the precious Fruits of the Earth and hath long Patience for it, till he receive the early and latter Rain, *Jam. v. 7. Tho' you do not reap the very Day you sow, yet, in due Time you shall reap if you faint not, Gal. vi. 9. David* found his waiting Time to usher in a gathering Time, *Psal. xl. 1, 2, 3. I waited patiently on the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my Cry, he brought me out of the horrible Pit, &c.* Old Simeon had waited for the Consolation of Israel, and behold the Holy Ghost led him to Sight of Christ in the Temple, *Luke ii. 25,* and downward. And this made the old Man sing, and say *Now let thy Servant depart in Peace; O I have lived long enough, for now I have got Christ in my Heart and Christ in my Hands, who is my Light, my Life, my Love, my Joy, my Crown, my Glory, my All.* O Believer, have you not found, when you have been weeping

weeping and waiting at the Door of Mercy, how the Lord hath sometimes caused his Love and Goodness to beam forth upon you, so as to make your Heart rejoice, and your Tongue to sing; yea, so as to gather your Soul to *Shiloh*, and to gather all the Lines of your Affections to meet in him, as the Centre of your Rest, and so as you could have wished the Valley of Vision had been your Burial-Place, and that your Eyes might never see another Sight than the glorious Jesus, that was discovered to you, when you was waiting on him in publick Ordinances, or in a certain secret Corner? But in Case any poor Soul may be saying, O, I have been waiting, and yet find so little Success, that I fear, I am a Stranger to the right Art of Waiting. Therefore, 5thly, A *Longing Time* may be a gathering Time, and hath been so; for, *Psal. cxvii. 9. He satisfies the longing Soul, and fills the Hungry with good Things.* Are you at David's four *How-longs*? *Psal. xiii. 1, 2. How long, Lord, wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? How long shall I take Counsel in my Soul, having Sorrow in my Heart daily? How long shall mine Enemies be exalted over me?* It seems his Longing was soon backed with gathering Influences, drawing out his whole Soul towards the Lord, and filling his Heart with Joy, and his Tongue with Singing, *Ver. 5, 6. I have trusted in thy Mercy; my Heart shall rejoice in thy Salvation; yea, I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.* O Believer, when you are longing, he is waiting, and waiting to be gracious, *Isa. xxx. 18.* Surely you have found it in your Experience, that your Longing Time hath been his gathering and gracious Time: But, lest you mistake, know that I speak of Gathering, in the whole of my Progress here, both in an active and passive Sense; both *passively*, that is, God's Gathering his People to *Shiloh*, and to more and more Nearness to him; and *actively*, that is, their active Gathering to him thro' his Grace. Now, say, a longing Times is, and bodes a further gathering

ing Time; for he fills the Hungry with good Things. Some have found that Promise of satisfying the longing Soul, as clearly made out, as it is evident, that the Light of Day shines at present. But some poor Soul may say, I fear it is no gathering Time with Respect to me; for I find no such Disposition as you have been speaking of; it is neither a Believing nor a Repenting Time with me, neither a praying, waiting, nor longing Time with me. Therefore, 6thly, An *Attending* Time, O Believer, may be a gathering Time; your attending Time, I say, O Soul, may be God's *gathering* Time. It is true, bodily Attendance, like bodily Exercise, profits little; when People come to Duties and Ordinances with their Bodies only, to see and hear, and hardly that, while their Eyes and Ears are sometimes shut with Sleep and Heaviness. But because preventing Grace hath laid Hold upon Sinners many Times, and taken them napping, and gathered them to *Shiloh*; therefore I shall not discourage Peoples Giving their bodily Attendance on Gospel-Means and Ordinances, even tho' they have neither an outward Ear, or inward Disposition towards a regular Attendance; Because tho', in such a Case, Justice might take Advantage against them righteously, yet none knows, but Mercy may catch them at a Disadvantage graciously; as it did the Man, who coming to Church, yet hating to hear, set his Elbows on the Desk, and put his Fingers into his Ears; but while he was napping, one of his Elbows falls down, and as his Finger went out of his Ear, a Word of the Sermon came in to it, by which the Lord caught him converted him and gathered him to *Shiloh*. But the Subject I am upon at present, relates to Believers, and their progressive Gathering; and it may be their Case sometimes, that an outward Attendance is all that they can win at; they can find neither any believing, repenting, praying, waiting, or longing Disposition of Soul in them. They can find no Life, no Light, no Liberty, no Grace, no spiritual Motion, or gracious Disposition, but on the contrary, much Darkness, Deadness, Dul-

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ness, Despondency, Distraction, Hardness, Heaviness and all spiritual Indisposition: Only this is all they can say, Some secret Hair of Hope hath brought them to attend, and give their bodily Presence, that they may hear what God will say to them, and see what God will do to them. Well, poor Soul, even such an attending Time as this may be a gathering Time, as you may see it was with these. spoken of, *Acts x. 33.* *We are all here present, say they, before God, to hear all Things that are commanded thee of God:* What they were to get, or receive from God, they knew not as yet; but all they could say at present, was, that they had brought their Souls and Bodies before God, to attend upon him in his Ordinances. It seems they had some secret Hope, that they might get some good by *Peter's* Preaching; and behold, it was a remarkable gathering Time, as you see, *Ver. 44.* For *while he spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the Word:* Therefore, if any poor Creature be here, saying, It does not look like a gathering Time with Respect to me; for it is not a believing Time, but a doubting Time; it is not a repenting Time, but rather a rebelling Time; it is not a praying Time, but rather a perplexing Time; not a waiting, but a wearying Time; not a longing, but a languishing Time; I cannot so much as pray, nor pant, nor long, nor look up; I can hardly give an hearty Sigh, or a Groan upwards. Well, but poor Thing, can you say, Lord, I am here present before thee, thou knowest this is all that I can do; I have no more, under Heaven, about me, of Disposition to any Duty or Ordinance, but a secret *May be the Lord will pity*, and may be not; I am just at the Footstool of Sovereignty. Well, such a Time may be a gathering Time; when they were all present before the Lord hearing, a gathering Wind came, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. This is one of the lowest Flowers. that appear in the Believer's Spring-time, when no Grace is appearing in his View at all, but only he is presenting himself before the God of all Grace; and does not the Believer find this to be

even a gathering Time, now and then in secret, as well as publick, when all he can do is just to cast himself down on his Knees, before the Lord his Maker, as it is, *Psal. xciv. 6.* with a *Who knows but the Lord may pity?* This Attendance on the Lord, even in this Manner, hath been blessed with a mighty gathering Wind about their Souls, that hath blown them nearer to the Lord, their Harbour of Rest, than ever they were before: Therefore, Believer, however low your Circumstances may be, when you can do no more but attend, as it were, at a secret Duty or publick Ordinance, never baulk your Attendance on the Lord, and presenting your selves before him; seeing your Attending Time may be his gathering Time. Thus I have mentioned to you some of the Believer's Spring-times of Duty, and some of the Fruits and Flowers that appear therein, which speak forth a gathering Time, and bode an Harvest: And this leads me to speak of another gathering Season, with Respect to the Believer's progressive Approach to Christ, or Gathering to *Shiloh*.

(4.) There are *Harvest-Times* of solemn Ordinances, or Gospel-Solemnities, not only teaching but sealing Ordinances, which his People sometimes have, and which are God's gathering Times, and the Believer's gathering Times, with Respect to their progressive Gathering unto *Shiloh*. And tho' the Lord of the Harvest, who sends forth Labourers thereunto, and takes them away when he pleases; as he hath lately removed one, that used to be an eminent Labourer at Solemnities, in *Airth*; on which Occasion, if we cannot say in Point of Paucity, that tho' the Harvest be great, the Labourers are few; yet sure I am, we may with Grief of Heart say, in Point of Quality, that the Harvest is great, and the honest evangelical Labourers are the fewer that he is gone: And the only Thing that makes such an heavy Loss to be supportable, is, that the Lord of the Harvest is to the fore, who can send forth Labourers, qualified for whatsoever Work he hath ado: But what I was saying, is, that tho' the Lord of the Harvest makes these Gospel-Solemnities

ies, frequently to be the gathering Times for Sinners, in Respect of their initial Gathering, of which I spoke before; yet the special Design of these Communion-Solemnities, is, for advancing the progressive Gathering of Believers: And, tho' the most remarkable Progress of the Believer may be upon his Knees in secret Duties, and in secret Prayer, and secret Intercourse betwixt and God him; yet publick Ordinances are the Means of these private Intercourses, tho' the secret may be most comfortable and refreshful, yet the publick Ordinances lay the Foundation of that secret Comfort and Refreshment. It is in this, as it is with the publick Well of a City, from whence People go and fetch Water to their private Houses; for ordinary, there is not so much Use made of the Water at the publick Well itself, till once they bring it Home in their Vessel to the private House or Family, and there it is more freely made Use of for several necessary Purposes, such as for Drink, and refreshing Meals, the liquid Part whereof is mostly made up of the Water, that was fetched Home from the Well: Publick Ordinances are the Wells; but, for ordinary, the Children of God are not so much refresh'd with the Water thereof, till once they win Home to some secret Corner with it, and there they get a more hearty Draught, and refreshing Drink of the Water of Life, than they got at the publick Well; but still it is from thence it was fetched; and so the Foundation of these private and secret refreshing Meals, is ordinarily laid in the publick Ordinances. It is true, some that go to fetch Home Water from the Well, may, according to their Need, get an hearty Drink of Water, even at the Side of the Well, before they bring any Water Home; and so the Lord's People may, and sometimes do, get a very heartsom and refreshing Draught of living Water, even at the Well-side of publick Ordinances, while they are hearing the Word, or receiving the Sacrament of the Supper. Now the Harvest time of Gospel-Solemnities, for the Believer's progressive Gathering unto *Shiloh*, is twofold, *Teaching* and *Sealing*. (1.)

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The Harvest-Time of *Teaching Solemnities* is his hearing Season, which frequently is God's gathering Season; the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is ordinarily made up in the Time of Hearing the Word, for Faith comes by Hearing; and the progressive Gathering of Believers, is ordinarily made up also in the Time of Hearing the Word, for the Increase of Faith comes by Hearing, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. *As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* And hence, the Doctrine of the Gospel is the ordinary Means of working and increasing Faith; because it is the Ministration of the Spirit, *Gal.* iii. 2. *Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* This Gospel is the Power of God to Salvation, both for working Faith, and for advancing it, *Rom.* i. 17. *For therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith.* By this Means we advance, if so be we have heard of him, and been taught by him, as the Truth is, in Jesus, *Eph.* iv. 21. The Gospel is like a Ladder, by which we climb up to a God in Christ, when he is gathering us to him; and every Truth of the Gospel is like so many Steps, or Rounds of the Ladder, and every one of them should be maintained and contended for: If any of the Rounds of the Ladder be broken off, you're in Danger of falling down, and your Climbing up is rendered more difficult or impossible: Every Truth denied, or Error maintained, is like a Cutting out, or Breaking off a Round of the Ladder; and whenever a Breach is made in it, the Climbing up by it is rendered impracticable, if it be a fundamental Error; or greatly obstructed, if it nearly concern the Fundamentals of Religion: We need therefore to be concerned, that every Truth be maintained by us, and transmitted to our Posterity pure and intire. It is our Mercy, that we have pure Standards; and if any latter Acts of this Church seem to clash therewith, we hope they have not the deliberate Approbation, even of those that framed them; however all Gospel-Truths ought to be sacred to us, as well as all the purchast Liberties and

Privileges in God's House; the Loss of the least whereof, is the Loss of a Jewel out of the Mediator's Crown: Christ is the Head, and Centre of all Gospel-Truth, and we ought to hold by the Head; and so we shall hold by the Truth, as it is in Jesus the Head. The Apostle complains of some, their not holding the Head, Col. ii. 19. Some instead of holding the Head, they hold by the Feet: It is enough to them, that such a good Man, or such a learned Man says so and so, concerning this or that Truth; and so let the Head go, and hold by the Feet, not regarding the Truth, as it is in Jesus; but the Truth, as it is delivered by such a Man, whom they esteem, or such another Man that hath this or that good Character: But we ought to hang and hold by the Head, and not to hang our Faith at the Belt of any Man or Angel; *For, if we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach another Doctrine, let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8.* Now, I say, That the Gospel-Season is the gathering Season; while Gospel-Truths are published, they are the Standard of the Captain of Salvation, to which the Gathering of his Soldiers should be, and will be, when the Gospel comes, not in Word only, but in Power. But again, *2dly*, The Harvest-Time of sealing Solemnities, that is the Believer's receiving Season, which frequently is God's gathering Season, when he forwards their progressive Gathering to *Shiloh*. This Ordinance of the Supper, being, in a special Manner, appointed, not for Conversion, but Confirmation; not for begetting spiritual Life where there is none, but for increasing it where begun: It is in this Ordinance, that the Lord is pleased, sometimes to seal up the Promise, to seal up the Covenant, to seal up his Love, and seal up their Pardon sensibly to their Souls; and to *make himself known to them in the Breaking of Bread, Luke xxiv. 35.* He brings them under the Shadow of a Sacrament, and *his Fruit is sweet unto their Taste*, and his Glory bright in their Eye; whereas they came stark blind, they have got their Eyes opened: Yea, sometimes they get here a sweet Breathing of Glory, in holy Perfume of

of the sweet embalming Love of Christ: Sometimes a young Heaven, a green Glory, a Taste of the Grapes of the good Land beyond *Jordan*, to keep the Taste in their Mouth, till they come to drink of the new Wine in their Father's Kingdom. Many a fainting Soul hath been refreshed, and revived with the Wine upon the Lees in this Ordinance; while He hath come, and pardoned all their Sins, healed all their Sores, supplied all their Wants, cleared all their cloudy Skies, and dung the Bottom out of all their Doubts and Fears, and thus gathered them, and brought them to more Nearness and Conformity to him: For, as when a Man makes a Timber Vessel for holding Food or the like, the first Cast may be very rough, and therefore he smooths it, and fits it more and more for Use; so the Souls of the Saints are at first Conversion but rough casten, as it were, therefore the Lord, by visiting of them, and manifesting himself to them in his Ordinances, does more and more fit the Vessel of Mercy for a Fill of the Liquor of Glory: Hence, these Divine Incomes now and then, that make them cry out, *O my Soul thirsts for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God? Psal. xlii. 2.* As the tossed Mariner long for the Haven, the Harbour; so does the Soul, that hath met with God in Ordinances, long to meet with him in Heaven. As one tells us, *That when once the Gauls of old had tasted of the sweet Wine that was made of the Grapes of Italy, Nothing would satisfy them but Italy, Italy;* so the Soul that hath once tasted of the Goodness of God, and Sweetness of Christ, and the Grapes of Paradise, Nothing satisfies that Soul at such a Time, but *O Paradise, Paradise!* O to be in Glory's Land, in *Immanuel's Land!* O to be forever with the Lord! It is true, as the Lord is Sovereign, and sometimes hides his Face from his Children in these Ordinances, and sacramental Solemnities, in so much that they go mourning without the Sun; so the Measures of his Communications are various, sometimes more bright and glorious, and sometimes more dark and cloudy; but as we enjoy the Light and Bene-

fit of the Sun, even when we cannot see it, because of the Clouds; so Believers do sometimes enjoy much of the Light, and Heat, and Warmth of the Sun of Righteousness, even when, by Reason of many Clouds, they cannot see him so clearly as at other Times; however every Glance of his Glory, in these Galleries of Ordinances, hath such a Soul-gathering Influence, such an Heart-drawing Virtue, that this Harvest-time may be called a gathering Season; while all the Faculties of the Soul, all the Affections of the Heart are gathered to, and centred on Christ, and longing to be gathered about the Throne, to see him Face to Face. And this leads me to the *fourth* and last Period, with Respect to the Season of this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*.

(4.) The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the consummate Gathering of the Saints; and of this final Gathering there are two Seasons, namely, The *Day of Death*, and the *Day of Judgment*. 1st, The Day of Death is a gathering Day to the Saints; for then Christ gathers his Lilies to himself, *Song vi. 2. My Beloved is gone down into his Garden, to gather Lilies*: When the Lilies are ripe, he gathers them into his Bosom; he picks up one here, and another there; and indeed some of the sweetest smelling Lilies in all the Garden of his Church, particularly in this and some neighbouring Presbyteries, hath the Lord been lately gathering; and among the rest, that Lily that used to cast such a savoury Gospel-Smell, at former Solemnities here; you cannot but know what I mean: But, O Sirs, if God shall gather up all the fairest and sweetest of his Lilies from among us, our Garden will become but unbeautiful and unfavoury: The Beauty and Savour is gone, when the Lilies are gathered; unless the Lord himself shall make other such Lilies to grow up in their Room. I remember that one of the last savoury Smells that that Lily cast among us, at the last Year's Solemnity, was in the pleasant opening of that Word, *Now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face*; And, no Doubt, it was in the

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Prospect of being gathered to the Place of *immediate Vision*, and full Enjoyment of God and the Lamb. And indeed a Time of Death is a Time of Gathering of the Saints to Glory, where their dark, and partial, and transient Enjoyment of God here, is turned to a clear, and full, perfect, permanent, and uninterrupted Enjoyment: For then, they know him, as they are known; *And there is no Temple there*, Rev. xxi. 22. *for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple of it*: And therefore, to him, as the Temple in Heaven, shall the *Gathering* of the People be. Hence, Death to the Godly is called a *Gathering*, Gen. xlix. *last*. It is said of *Jacob*, when he died, *He was gathered unto his People*; why, one would think, he was rather taken away from his People; for he was dying, and all his Children and Grandchildren about him; yea, but he had People elsewhere, and better Company, that he was going to, even *the General Assembly and Church of the First born, that are written in Heaven, the Spirits of just Men made perfect*, and all the Saints that had gone before him. O Sirs, see what Company ye chuse now; if ye be of the Wicked and Ungodly, your Death will be but a *Gathering* to the Devil and Reprobates in Hell; if you miss Heaven at the first Shot of Death, you are gone for ever: When a Man shoots at a Mark in his Lifetime, if he miss at one Shot, he may shoot another, and shoot again and again, till he hit; but if you miss Heaven at the first Shot of Death, you are not to live again, to shoot another Shot for it: Therefore, let your Life now be a *Pressing towards the Mark*, a Shooting at the right Mark, a *Gathering to Shiloh*; for these that are gathered to him graciously in Life, will be gathered gloriously to him at Death; for then, *The Souls of Believers do immediately pass into Glory*; when their Bodies are laid in the Dust, their Souls are gathered to their People in Heaven, where Christ is the Centre of the Assembly, 1 *Thes. iv. 17. And so shall we ever be with the Lord*. There are Angels and Arch-angels in Heaven, there are Saints and Seraphims there; but a

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will not make an Heaven without Christ; he is the Light of the Place, and the Heart of the Company for ever, and to him shall the Gathering of the People be. But then, *2dly*, The Day of Judgment will be a most remarkable Season of the consummate Gathering of his People to him: The Text indeed speaks mainly of Christ's first Coming in the Flesh, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, till Shiloh come, and to him shall the Gathering of the People be*; but it will be also true of his second Coming in the Clouds of Heaven; for then will he gather his Saints together unto him, these that have made a Covenant with him by Sacrifice, *Psal. l. 5*. Therefore the Apostle joins his second Coming, and this glorious Gathering together, *2 Thes. ii. 1*. *We beseech you, Brethren, by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our Gathering together unto him. Then will he send his Angels, with the great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, Matth. xiii. 27. & xxiv. 31. from one End of Heaven to another*; wherever the Wind of Providence hath driven their Dust: Tho' the Dust of the Believer's Body may be scattered to all Corners of the Earth and Sea, and resolved to the original Elements, of which it was at first compounded; yet God will gather it all together again, when he makes the Earth to give up its Dead, and the Sea to give up its Dead, *Rev. xx. 13*. And therefore, *tho' Worms destroy this Body, yet in their Flesh shall they see God*, according to the Words of *Job*, wherein he expresseth his Faith of the happy Resurrection, *Job xix. 25*. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.* for then, as God will gather together their scattered Bones and Dust, so he will bring their glorified Souls along with him, *1 Thess. iv. 14*. and he will reunite these Two intimate Friends, Soul and Body; they shall meet with one another, and meet the Lord in the Air: O let none of us think it incredible, that God should raise the Dead; for in that Day when *Shiloh* comes again, he will gather together and make up all his Jewels, *Mal.*

iii. 17. Tho' his Jewels be lying among the Dust, yet he will separate his Jewel-Dust from the rest of the Dust: For as Christ is the Load-stone, that draws the Hearts of People to him, that are gathered to him by his Grace now, according to his own Word, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all Men unto me*; So at his second Coming, he will be the glorious Load-stone, that will draw all the precious Dust of the Saints together to him. You that know the Vertue of the Load-stone will know this, (which I have sometimes tried, with a Load stone in my Hand) Let the Filings of Steel, never so small, be mixed with Dust, so as it is impossible, you would think, to separate the Dust of the Steel from the Dust of the other Earth; yet, if you bring near the Load-stone, all the Filings of the Steel will separate from the rest, and fly up to the Load-stone, in the tenth Part of the Twinkling of an Eye. O, if the Load-stone have such a Vertue, what must be the Vertue of him that gave Vertue to it? Whenever *Shiloh* comes in the Clouds of Heaven, behold, in the Twinkling of an Eye, all the Redeemed that sleep in the Dust will be gathered; the glorious Load-stone will put forth its Vertue, and they will be all drawn to him in a Moment, 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 17. There is the glorious and consummate Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*: It is true, the Day of Judgment will be a separating Day, the Sheep will be separate from the Goats, and the Wheat from the Tares; see *Matth. xiii. 30*. But however terrible that Day will be to the Christless World, that could never be gathered to *Shiloh*, when they shall be gathered together in Bundles, and cast into the Fire of God's everlasting Wrath; yet glorious, glorious will the Gathering be of all the Redeemed, as they will be gathered to him, so they will be Assessors with him in Judgment; *Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the World?* Yea, they shall judge Angels, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. They will sit upon the Bench of Judgment with Christ, and applaud him in all his judicial Procedure against wicked Men and Devils. These, who formerly

ampled them, like Dirt under their Feet, will then
 and, like so many guilty Pannels before them ; and
 when the irreverfible Doom goes forth, *Depart from me,*
Curfed, &c. the gathered Saints will joyfully adore
 the Equity of the Judge, and will not fo much as give a
 Sigh or a Sob at the Terror of the Sentence againft the
 Wicked, but clap their Hands, and fend them to Hell
 with a Shout. O that wicked and Chriftlefs Souls would
 fear and tremble, and flee from the Wrath to come, in
 the awful Apprehenfion of this glorious Day ! Devils
 quake at the Apprehenfion of this Day, they believe
 and tremble, and yet finful Men are fearless ; but
 when the great Judge will erect his fiery Tribunal in
 the Air, fee if you fhall be able to bear up, be as stout-
 hearted as you can. O Man, Death is infenfibly
 stealing away your Breath, and after Death comes the
 Judgment, and then comes the doleful Gathering of
 the Wicked to be the Fuel of eternal Flames : Be-
 caufe it would he have gathered you, as a Hen does her
 Chickens under her Wings, but ye would not be ga-
 thered, therefore you'll be feparate from him for ever ;
 you would not come for his Bleffing, therefore you
 muft depart with this Curfe, *Depart from me, ye Cur-*
fed ; then fhall they be punifhed with everlafting De-
struction from the Prefence of the Lord, and the Glory
of his Power. O Sinner, flee, flee to *Sbiloh* ; Let the
 gathering of the People be to him now, that you
 may fhare of the Glory of that confummate Gathering
 of the Saints : After Judgment, the gathered Saints
 will return, and come to *Zion* with Songs ; God having
 that Day gathered together, and made up all his
 Jewels, what a bright Conftellation will thefe Jewels
 make, when they fhall be all gathered together in the
 Firmament of Glory, *Dan. xii. 3.* Yea, they will *fhine*
as the Brightnefs of the Firmament, and as the Stars
ever and ever. *Mat. xiii. 43.* Then, fays Chrift,
all the Righteous fhine as the Sun in the Kingdom of
their Father ; that is, even all thefe poor Things that
 have been gathered to *Sbiloh*, as the Lord their Right-
 eoufnefs and Strength. O Sirs, this glorious Gather-
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ring Day will be upon you, before we be all gathered together on Earth again: Some that were at the last Year's Gathering here, are now gone to Eternity, and you'll never see them again, till you and they be gathered together before the awful Tribunal; and without all Peradventure, there are here that will never see another Sacrament at *Airth*; it may be you Man; it may be you, Woman; it may be such a Minister, or such a private Person; it may be such a Laird or Lady, such a Lad or Lass, as have little Thoughts of Death at present. O Sirs, I am looking to you, and you to me; but we will never all see one another, till we see the Son of Man, the Son of God coming in the Clouds of Heaven, and gathering all the World before him: And therefore, in the View of that gathering Day, O let not this Gathering of People here part from one another and dismiss, till once there be a Gathering unto *Shiloh*. Now, we beseech you, Brethren, by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our Gathering together unto him at the great Day of his Appearance, that you consent to be gathered, and that this present Gathering be not dissolved, till your Hearts and Affections be gathered to *Shiloh*, and centred in him. O choose rather to die upon the Spot, than not be gathered unto him this Day. Many a gathering Word and Call you have got these Days bygone, and Christ is saying, How oft would I have gathered you, yet ye would not! O is he saying, I would gather you, Man, Woman? then What would you? Have you no Will to be gathered? Have you no Will to be gathered out of the stinking Prison of your Lusts and Idols, your Self and Self Righteousness, your Worldliness and Covetousness, your Pride and Vanity? Whatever be the filthy stinking Prison that you are like to perish in, he is saying I would gather you out of it: And, O Man, Woman would you rather be gathered to the Devil, than gathered unto *Shiloh*? Would you rather be gathered to a Tavern of Drunkenness, Lewdness and Carnality than gathered to the Temple of Grace and Glory?

Would you be gathered to *Shiloh*, or not? It is come
 must to this, Man, *What would you that I should do un-*
to you? Would you that I should gather you? Behold,
 he is declaring his Will in this Gospel. Is he saying,
 The Gathering of the People shall be to him? Does he
 say, It shall be? then O say, *Amen*, Lord, so let it be.
 The Strength of Unbelief lies in your Unwillingness to
 be gathered; and if the Will were once broken, it
 would be a Day of Power, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall*
be willing in the Day of thy Power. O, has there
 any Power been here to make you willing? willing to
 be gathered to him as a Priest, and a Prince both?
 willing to be gathered out of the Prison of Sin, as well
 as out of the Prison of Hell and Wrath? willing to
 be gathered to him for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sancti-
 fication, and complete Redemption, and to be in-
 debted to him for all and every Part of his Salvation?
 willing to have all from him for nothing, so as the Praise
 and Glory of all may redound to himself? O, are you
 thus willing to be gathered under his Wings of Grace
 and Glory? Then, Glory to God, for the Power that
 hath made you willing; or if you cannot say, that that
 Power is what you have felt, yet is it that Will-break-
 ing Power you would be at, saying, O let this
 gathering Power be exerted? there is Hope in *Israel*
 concerning you. O may Sinners be gathered to him:
 This is God's Design by the Gospel, and we hope it
 is our Design in preaching it, to get Sinners gathered.
 And, O let me tell you, That there is such a glorious
 Gathering of excellent Things in him, as may engage
 the Hearts of all the Sinners here to gather unto him,
 and all the Believers here to be ay gathering to him
 more and more: Why, what for a Gathering is there
 in him? O there is a Gathering of all Glories in him,
 the Glory of Saints, the Glory of Angels, the Glory
 of God is in him, so that he is altogether lovely: The
 Gathering of all Perfection is in him, and all Divine
 Attributes and Fulness; for it pleased the Father that
 in him should all Fulness dwell, so that he hath all
 Fulness of Ability and Authority to save: **The Gather-**
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ring of all Righteousness and Strength is in him ; therefore, to him should Men come, *Iſa.* xlv. 24. The Gathering of all the Promises is in him, for all the Promises are Yea and Amen in him ; there is no Promise out of him : The Gathering of all Graces is in him, that out of his Fulness we may come and receive Grace for Grace ; and to whom should the Gathering of the People be, but to him that hath all Grace for them ? The Gathering of all Blessings is in him, for all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places are only in Christ Jesus, *Eph.* i. 3. And to whom should the Gathering of the People be, but to him, of whom it is said, *That Men shall be blest in him, and all Nations shall call him Blessed*, *Pſal.* lxxii. 17. and no Blessing is to be had out of him : The Gathering of all Mercy is in him, and therefore all the Mercies of the everlasting Covenant are called the sure Mercies of *David* : all the Mercy of God is in Christ, and there is no Mercy in God out of Christ towards any Sinner : The Gathering of all Gifts is in him ; he hath received Gifts for Men, even for the Rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them ; the Gift of the Spirit especially, for he hath received the Spirit above Measure, and so hath all the Influences of the Spirit to give : He received Gifts for Men, all is for Men and for the People ; all the promised Righteousness, Graces, Blessings, Mercies and Gifts that he hath received, as Mediator, and that are gathered in him, is for the People, that the Gathering of the People may be to him. There is a Gathering of all Things in him, for he is All in all ; and all Things are yours, if once you are gathered to him ; whereas you have nothing at all but Sin, Death and Misery out of him. In a Word, there is a Gathering of all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and all unsearchable Riches in him for making you up, and making you happy for ever, and to whom should the Gathering of poor People be but to him ? What shall I say ? There is a Gathering of all saving Offices in him ; he is a Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, and all Office

in one: Whatever be your Want, he hath an Office for supplying it; whatever be your Debt, he hath an Office for paying it; whatever be your Disease, he hath an Office for curing it; for Diseases in the Mind, he is a Prophet; for Diseases of the Conscience, he is a Priest; for Diseases of the Will, he is a King; and for all other Maladies that can be named, he hath all other healing Offices that can be named: Yea, for wonderful Maladies he hath wonderful Offices, for wonderful Sins he hath wonderful Pardons, for wonderful Plagues he hath wonderful Plaisters. O, is there such a Gathering of all good Things in him for the People, and shall there be no Gathering of the People to him? Christ hath no other Use for these Things that are thus gathered in him, but for the Behoof of the People that gather to him; and they would all be useless, if there were no Gathering of the People to him. O shall he be an useless *Shiloh* for you? And have you no Need of him, no Use for him? O Dole and Misery! Will you stand aback from him, as if he were an Useless Christ? But if you have any Use for him then, all that he wants is to have your Employment; to believe is to employ him to do all your Work in you and for you. Doing and Believing are very different Things; if you be for doing all your self, in Order to your own Salvation and Justification, then you make Christ useless, and his Death vain, *Gal. ii. Last. If Righteousness come by the Law, Christ is dead in vain.* But if you be for Believing, then know what Believing or Faith is. Faith does nothing, but gives Christ all ado, and lets him have the Glory of doing all that belongs to his Office, saying, Lord, work, work, work for me, and in me: And hence, tho' Believing be no Doing, yet the best Believer is the best Doer, because the Work that is put in Christ's Hand is best done; and because, while Faith does nothing, but only employs the Strength of Christ to do all, then, through Christ's Strengthening, it can do all Things. Now, O shall Christ get no Employment here? Will there be no Gathering to him for Righteousness and

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Strength?

Strength? I hope some have been gathered and drawn to him, and can say, The Lord God of the *Hebrews* met with us, and made a Soul-gathering Influence run through and through our Hearts. O, let the whole of your Life be a Gathering to *Shiloh*, and a Living upon him: And, now the great Gathering of People here may be joyfully dismissed, tho' they shall never all meet together in Time, if this Promise of Christ hath taken Effect, *To him shall the Gathering of the People be.* ¶

At Carnock, July 4th & 5th, 1725.

SIXTH HEAD.

The *Sixth* general Head was, to give you the Reasons of the Doctrine; and here I am to show you, 1st, Why there must be a Gathering of the People, the Gentiles? 2^{dly}, Why to *Shiloh* must the Gathering be? Why to him?

(1.) Why are the People, the *Gentiles*, to be gathered? For this Part of the Text concerns the Gentiles, in Contradistinction from the *Jews*; *To him shall the Gathering of the People be*, the Gentile People. It was in Pursuance of this Design that the Apostle Paul was called the Apostle of the Gentiles; and he magnified his Office, and boasts of it, saying, *Eph. iii. 8. To me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* This is a Question of the greatest Concern to us Gentiles: Why, is our Name put in Christ's Commission? O, it should be good News to us; and for confirming our Faith herein, take these Six Grounds and Reasons for it; 1. There must be a Gathering of Gentile People to him, for filling up the Room which the *Jews* left. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not; and since the *Jews* rejected him, and cast out themselves by Unbelief, the Gentiles are taken in, to succeed to them in their Church-Privileges, *Rom. xi. 11. Through*
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their Fall, *Salvation is come to the Gentiles*; and, *v. 19. These Branches were taken off, that the Gentiles might be grafted in.* The Room which the *Jews* left vacant must be filled up with *Gentiles*, *Luke xiv. 15.* and downward, where the Gospel-Intertainment is compared to a great Man's Supper, to which many were bidden; some reject the Invitation, particularly the *Jews*, that had the first Honour of being invited to the Banqueting-House, that is, to partake of Christ and his Gospel-Blessings; others embraced the gracious Offer, particularly the poor despised outcast *Gentiles*, even these that were without the Law. Hence see and read *v. 21, 22, 23.* there you see the *Gentiles* called, to fill up the Room that the *Jews* left vacant. 2. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to reprove and punish the Unbelief of the *Jews*, from whom the Sceptre is departed, and to provoke them to Jealousy, *Rom. xi. 11.* for as *because of Unbelief they were broken off, Rom. xi. 20.* so for the Punishment of their Unbelief; see what God says to them, *Deut. xxxii. 21.* compared with *Rom. x. 19. I will provoke you to Jealousy, by them that are no People.* The *Jews* had the first Offer, *Acts iii. last.* and the *Gentiles* had but their Leavings. But what a Provocation it was to the *Jews*, to see *Gentiles* taken into Favour, is represented in the Parable, *Luke xv.* where the elder Brother envied the Reception and Intertainment of the prodigal *Gentiles*; and more plainly, *Acts xiii. 45.* where you see how the *Gentiles* were received, in *v. 46, 47, 48.* Thus, whenever the *Jews* heard, that the Apostle *Paul* had a Commission to go to the *Gentiles*, see how they were provoked, *Acts xxii. 21, 22.* It was their Sin that they were thus enraged, and God makes oftentimes Peoples Sin their Punishment; A Man needs no greater Plague, than to be left to the impetuous Rage of his own Lusts: However, in gathering of the *Gentiles*, God shews his Anger and Displeasure at the Unbelief of the *Jews*; and, to this Day, their Posterity, scattered up and down the Earth, are under the dismal Effects of this

Anger; for, ever since *Shiloh* came, the *Jews* have been set to the Door, and the *Gentiles* gathered in: Yea, 3. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to pave a Way for the glorious Gathering of the *Jews* again, *Rom. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26.* Here is a two-fold Mystery, namely, that the Gathering of the *Gentiles* will make Way for the renewed Gathering and Conversion of the *Jews*. I shall read you some Promises you have thereof, *Isa. xi. 10, 11, 12. Jer. xxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6.* These, you may see, have evidently a further Look than their Deliverance from *Babylon*, *Zech. xii. 10. & 13. 1.* As we have Encouragement to pray for the Conversion of the *Jews*, so, if there were a Spirit of Prayer to a God in Christ among us, in their Behalf, who were his ancient People, we might then think, the happy Day were hastning, wherein it is promised, That the *Gentiles* shall further the Gathering of the *Jews*, *Isa. xlix. 22. & lx. 9, 10. & lxvi. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.* See *Zech. ii. 10, 11, 12. & viii. 21, 22, 23.* Again, 4. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to shew the Sovereignty of his Grace, and Freedom of his Mercy, *Rom. ix. 15. That he will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he will have Compassion:* The *Jews* expected to monopolize this Privilege, of being God's People and Church, continually to themselves; and few thought, that the *Gentiles* should become *Fellow-Citizen of the Saints, and of the Household of God:* But God's Thoughts are not our Thoughts; he shews his Sovereignty, in pitching upon what Nation of the Earth it pleases him. *The Potter hath Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour:* The great Creator of the Ends of the Earth does thus shew his Power and Authority, in making these a People that were no People, and these his People that were not his People, *Rom. ix. 25, 26.* This therefore was one of the great Mysteries of Godliness, Christ preached unto the *Gentiles*, and believed on in the World, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* This was a Mystery, that with great Difficulty could be received,

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and believed by the Apostles; for when *Peter* was persuaded, by the Vision of a Sheet knit at the four Corners, wherein was all Manner of four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things, and Fowls of the Air, not to despise the *Gentiles* as common and unclean, and accordingly had preached the Gospel with Success to them, he was accused by the rest of the Apostles, *Acts xi. 1, 2, 3.* till *Peter* making his Defence, *They held their Peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God granted to the Gentiles Repentance unto Life, Ver. 18.* And in all this, the Lord acted in a Suitableness to his ancient Promise, concerning the Calling and In-bringing of the *Gentiles*. It is long since God promised by *Noah*, saying, *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, Gen. ix. 27.* Now of *Japhet* came the *Gentiles*, *Gen. x. v.* and of *Shem* came the *Jews*; so that by this Prophecy, there is a clear Prediction of the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, and their inheriting the Privileges of the *Jews*, to the Praise of sovereign Grace. 5. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to shew the Extent and Sufficiency of his Grace, as well as the Sovereignty and Freedom of it: How extensive is his Grace and Goodness, in Gathering in the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, under the Wings of his Favour and Mercy? While he sets open his Intertaining-room Doors to Sinners, out of every Tongue, and Nation, and Kindred, where neither *Jew* nor *Greek*, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, *Scythian*, Bond nor Free are excluded; but all are one and alike in *Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11.* Herein he appears to act with a Greatness like himself, becoming his boundless Infinity, and not after the Manner of Men, but like a God; and so to signalize his Goodness beyond the Compass of Man; *For he is God, and not Man, Hos. xi. 9.* It were a Diminution of the Glory of his Grace, if it were said, This is Nothing, but what a Man might do. It is his Glory, to act in such a Manner, as is proper to none but a God, a God of boundless Grace and unparalleled Goodness; that when poor

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Dogs, Pagans, Gentiles find his Goodness, even extending to them Cast-aways, that were rejected of Men, they may have it to say, *Is this the Manner of Men, O Lord?* 6. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to show the Glory and Greatness of Christ's Kingdom; *That his Dominion reacheth from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the End of the Earth:* See *Psal.* lxxii. 8, 10. As it is the Glory of a King, to have many Subjects, a numerous Train, and a great Retinue; so it is the Glory of our *Shiloh*, that the Gathering of the People is unto him even *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and so many the more to celebrate the Praises of free Grace, and to adorn the Triumph of his glorious Throne above, with loud Acclamations of *Grace, Grace.* *Solomon* tells us *Prov.* xiv. 28. That the Glory of a King is in the Multitude of his Subjects; so it is the Glory of King *Jesus*, to have a Multitude of People gathered to him; and O, that he may get Honour here this Day, by gathering a Multitude of Souls, that they may come and set the Crown upon the Head of an exalted *Jesus*!

(2.) Why to *Shiloh* must the Gathering of the People be? Why, 1st. To him must the Gathering of the People be, because to him the Headship and Government of the People does belong: All the People that come of *Adam*, have lost their Head since *Adam* Fall; or, if they have no other Head than the first *Adam*, they are no better than an headless Company, yea and worse; for, from *Adam* their first Head, there is Nothing but Sin, and Death conveyed, *Rom.* v. 12. But now, the second *Adam*, the promised *Shiloh*, constitute the Head of the People, the Head of the Body the Church, *That in all Things he might have the Pre-eminence,* *Col.* i. 18. And to whom should the Gathering of the People be, but to him, who is the Head of the People, and the Head over all Things of the Church? *Eph.* i. 22: He is the Head influential and political: The Head of Influences; for all the Influences of Light, and Life, and Strength, and Comfort

me from him : The Head of Government ; for, *Isa.*
 6. *The Government is laid upon his Shoulders, and*
the Increase of his Government and Peace there
shall be no End ; upon the Throne of David, and upon
his Kingdom to order it, and to establish it with
judgment and Justice for ever. Ver. 7. The Scep-
tre is departed from Judah ; but it shall never depart
from Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah : The
Sceptre is fallen into his Hand ; and to whom should
the Gathering of the People be, but under the Scep-
tre of this glorious King ? O that there were a Flock-
to touch the Sceptre of King Jesus ! For, God
made this Jesus, who was crucified, to be both
God and Christ, Acts ii. 36. He hath set his King
in his holy Hill of Zion, Psal. ii. 6. He hath ex-
alted him, by his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Sa-
viour, Acts v. 31. The Sceptre, and the Lawgiver
is departed from Judah, from the Jews, since Shiloh
is gone ; but the Sceptre and the Lawgiver is come to the
Christians ; For, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is
our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us,
xxx. 22. There needs no other Reason, why the
Gathering of the People must be to him ; for he being
Head and King of the People, by God the Fa-
ther's Appointment, all divine Honours are owing to
him ; he must be the Object of our Faith, Love, Trust,
Obedience and Worship, as he is God-Man Mediator ;
it is the Will of the Father, that all Men honour
his Son, even as they honour the Father ; and to him
shall the Glory of the Gathering be, Isa. xxii. 24.
On him must be hung all the Glory of his Father's
House, even all the Vessels of small Quantity, as well
as great, from the Vessels of Cups to the Vessels of
Incense ; all the Vessels of Mercy, that are gathered
together to God's House, they must be gathered to
him, and fastened on him, as the glorious Nail in a
Place ; For it is he that builds the Temple of the
Church, Zech. vi. 13. and shall bear the Glory : For he
sitteth and rule upon his Throne : People gather a-
round the Throne of a King ; and O, should not the

Gathering of the People be about the Throne of Grace to see the Glory, and touch the Sceptre of him that sits upon the Throne? To him the Headship and Government of the People does belong; therefore to him must the Gathering of the People be. 2dly, To him must the Gathering of the People be; because to him does the Work of the People belong. As he is appointed to be an Head to them, so a Worker for them ever since the Covenant of Works was broken; and our working Arm broken, we being by Nature without Strength, it is he that works all our Work in us, and for us, *Isa. xxvi. 12.* Hence says the Psalmist *David Psal. lvii. 2. I will cry unto God most High, unto God that performs all Things for me.* There is a twofold Work that we need to have performed, namely, Work satisfying to the Law, as a *Covenant*; and Work suitable to the Law, as a *Rule*. Now the Performing of both these Works belongs to Christ, as he is made of God and us, both Righteousness and Sanctification: The Work satisfying to the Law, as a *Covenant*, is performed by him as our Righteousness, while he fulfils the Righteousness of the Law for, and in his People, *Rom. vi. 4.* The Work suitable to the Law, as a *Rule*, is performed in and thro' him, as our Sanctification; while he puts his Spirit within us, and causes us to walk in his Statutes, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27.* And hence, says Christ *John xv. 5. Without me ye can do Nothing*: The Word is *χωρις εμου*, severed from me, or separated from me, ye can do Nothing: Why then, we must not remain separate from him; but gather to him, he is the Mediator, and the All of the Covenant. The whole Weight and Work of the Covenant belongs to him, and this makes it a Covenant of Grace to us and not of Works; because all the Work falls to his Share: There is his doing Work, for the People; he came to fulfil all Righteousness, that so the People might say, *In the Lord have I Righteousness, Isa. xlv. 24.* Therefore it follows, *To him shall Men come.* To gain, there is his suffering Work for the People, which Account, the Gathering of the People should

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to him, *Heb. xiii. 13. That he might sanctify the People with his own Blood, he suffered without the Gates; therefore let us go forth to him:* There is his Dying Work; for he suffered unto Death, and his Death was an Act of Obedience, he being obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross: This is the Gospel delivered unto us, to be preached unto the People, *How that Christ died for our Sins according to the Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 3.* And shall he die for the People, and yet there be no Gathering of the People to him? There is his Repairing Work, for the Behoof of the People; and in the Works just now mentioned, this repairing Work is accomplished; for he repairs the Breaches of the Law, that our Sin made: And not only is the Law magnified, and made honourable, by his Doing and Dying, while his Doing answers the Precept, and his Dying the Threatning thereof, and that to infinite Advantage; but the Glory of the Lawgiver is repaired: The People had come short of the Glory of God; but he, to whom the Gathering of the People must be, did repair the Honour and Glory of his Holiness, by a perfect Obedience; and the Glory and Honour of his Justice, by a condign Satisfaction; and thus brought in Glory to God in the Highest; yea, and made all the other glorious Attributes of God shine forth gloriously and harmoniously, in the Work of our Redemption. And hence, when Christ was about this Work, he says, *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him, John xiii. 31.* There is his purchasing Work, for the Behoof of the People: *He hath bought the People with a Price, 1 Cor. vi. last;* And shall not the Gathering of the People be to him, whose Blood was the Price of the Peoples Souls, and the Purchase-Money for buying Grace and Glory to them? There is his pleading Work for the People; For *he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make Intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25.* And this is the Reason for their Coming and Gathering to him; for, in so doing, they shall have an Evidence, that his Pleading for them hath been, and will be

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be for ever effectual. There is also a *conquering* Work, that belongs to him, according to *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*: Therefore the Gathering of the People shall be to him, because the Conquering of the People belongs to him; and how he conquers them, by the Sword of his powerful Grace, you see, *Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5*. Indeed there will be no Gathering to him, till this conquering Power come; and therefore, if you would be gathered, cry to him to gird this Sword upon his Thigh, and to send the Rod of his Strength out of Zion, that it may be mighty through God to the pulling down of strong Holds, &c. O that his Voice in the Gospel were powerful! Some tell us that the Lion's Whelps are born dead at first, till, by the roaring of the old Lion over them, they are quickned: It is true enough in the Case of the People that are gathered to *Shiloh*; they are born dead, and remain so, till the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* roar so loudly, as to quicken them with his powerful Voice, according to *John v. 28. The Hour comes, when the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*; his Voice quickens, conquers, and captivates them: And as it is his Work to conquer them; so to conquer all their Enemies for them, whether it be Sin, Satan, Death, Hell, or the World, that they may be more than Conquerors thro' him; and all this conquering Work belongs to him, that the Gathering of the People may be to him. And, in a Word, there is a strengthening Work, that belongs to him, as well as a leading, guiding, comforting, and counselling Work, that I might mention, together with all the other Parts of his saving Work; *I can do all Things through Christ strengthening me*, says *Paul*. And it is upon this Footing, that all the Fruits of Faith come in, even all the Works of spiritual Gospel Obedience. When we go forth to any Work, we are to go in the Strength of the Lord, *making Mention of his Righteousness, and of his only*; being strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might; strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus,

sus, and strengthened with Might by his Spirit in the
 inner Man : His Strength being made perfect in our
 Weakness; and he working in us both to will and to do
 of his good Pleasure. Thus he is the Strength of Is-
 rael, the Strength of the People ; for which Cause, the
 Gathering of the People must be to him; and because,
 in this Manner, the Work of the People belongs to
 him, to work all their Works in them, and for them.
 But then again, 3dly, To him must the Gathering of
 the People be, because to him does the Instruction of
 the People belong ; for as the Purchase of the People
 belongs to him, as a Priest, and the Conquest of the
 People belongs to him, as a King ; so the Instruction
 of the People belongs to him, as a Prophet. And in-
 deed, tho' I mention it here in the third Place, yet
 this is the first Part of his gathering Work, to instruct,
 and teach, and enlighten; and may we not say, with
 Elihu, Job xxxvi. 22. *Who teacheth like him?* He is
 the None-such Teacher of the People ; and therefore,
 must the Gathering of the People be to him: In Vain
 is the Gathering of the People about Tents and Pul-
 pits, if their Eyes look no higher than towards poor
 Ministers, mortal Worms like themselves, that can on-
 ly speak to their Ears, but cannot make one Beam of
 Divine Light to break in upon their Minds and Under-
 standings. This is the peculiar Work of him who is
 the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the World,
 the Light to lighten the Gentiles: It is He only, by
 his Spirit, that can make us to know God, and the
 Things of God, John i. 18. *No Man hath seen God
 at any Time; the only begotten Son, which is in the
 Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* He is
 the blessed and only Teacher and Instructor, and there-
 fore the Gathering of the People should be to his
 School, that they may be all taught of God, John vi.
 45. *And every Man therefore that hath heard and
 learned of the Father comes to me,* says Christ; where
 it is pleasant to observe, comparing this and the for-
 mer Scripture together, that as God and Christ both
 are Teachers here, so the Father and the Son both are

the Lesson taught, in the Light of the eternal Spirit: And, that as there is no Coming to Christ, nor Gathering to him, but under the Influence of the Father's Teaching; nor is there any Coming to the Father, but by the Son, who is the Way: So the great Lesson that the Father teaches is the Son, and the great Lesson that the Son teaches is the Father; and so the whole Teaching comes to this, a knowing the Father in the Son by the Holy Ghost. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, in a peculiar Manner, is the great Prophet and Teacher, being anointed with a supereminent Unction of the Spirit of Wisdom for this End, *Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach*; O glorious Preacher and Teacher! *I have put my Spirit upon him*, says the Father, *that he might bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles*, that is, *Light and Instruction to the People*; and therefore should the Gathering of the People be to him. O then, let all the People say, *To whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.* 4thly, *To him must the Gathering of the People be*, because to him does the *Salvation* of the People belong. *Salvation from Sin belongs to him*, therefore *His Name is called JESUS*, because he saves his People from their Sins, *Mat. i. 21. Salvation from Wrath belongs to him*, therefore his Name is also called, *even JESUS*, which delivered us from the Wrath to come, *1 Thess. i. last.* And not only the privative, but the positive *Salvation* of the People belongs to him: Hence, whom he saves he adopts, whom he saves he adorns, whom he saves he anoints, whom he saves he justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. O then, to whom should the Gathering of Sinners be, but to him who is the Saviour of Sinners? *1 Tim. i. 5. This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save Sinners, of whom (viz. of saved Sinners) I am the Chief.* O let every Man and Woman here say it with Application; say it, Man, Woman, Lads, Ladies, and I'll say it with you thro' Grace, *of whom I am the Chief*, even the Chief of Sinners, whom he came to

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save. Let not Unbelief say, It may be he came not to save
 me: For this Gospel declares that your Name is in his
 sealed Commission, if you be a Sinner; there is the Go-
 spel-charter let down from Heaven, and it is a Letter, di-
 rected on the Back, *For you Sinners*; Jesus Christ came
 to save Sinners: And if you open the Charter, and read
 it with Application to your self, you will find that it is
 all for you, both within and without. O hath Christ
 a Commission to save the People, and shall not the
 People gather to him for Salvation? Hath he a Com-
 mission to save Sinners, and shall he return with his
 Commission in his Hand, saying, Father, thou gavest
 me a Commission to seek and save that which was lost,
 and yonder lost Sinners will not have me nor my Salva-
 tion either? They love their Lusts better than me, they
 love their own proud Fancy better than my Righteouf-
 ness, and they will not believe that I have so much
 Good-will to them as to save them; they will not trow
 but I'm cheating them with some goodly Words: I
 would gather them, but they will not be gathered;
 and save them, but they will not come to me that they
 might have Life, tho' I have a Commission from the
 Father to give Life to dead Sinners. Why, may One
 think or say, If Christ hath such a Commission to save
 Sinners, then let him execute his Commission, I shall
 not hinder him. What is that you're saying, Mad?
 Let me hear that again: If he hath a Commission to
 save Sinners, let him come and save me, I shall not
 hinder him. Is it Jest or Earnest that you're saying?
 If your Heart be jesting, while you are speaking thus
 in your Heart, and despising a Saviour notwithstan-
 ding; then it is a dreadful Jest: *Behold, ye Despisers,*
wonder and perish; How shall ye escape, if ye neglect
so great Salvation? But are you in Earnest, O Sin-
 ner, saying, Since it is his Office to save Sinners O let
 him do it for God's Sake, let him execute his saving
 Office on me the Chief of Sinners; for, the Lord
 knows, I would not desire to hinder him? Why, poor
 Soul, I'll tell you good News, He seeks no more at
 your Hand than what you are saying, namely, that you
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do not resist nor refuse his Grace by Unbelief; but that your Heart say, Content, Lord; content to have Salvation from all my Sins and Lusts, content to have all the Salvation that Christ came to give: Why, he came to give Life, and to give it more abundantly; and when he is content to give, and you content to receive, there is little more ado, than to bless him that it is a Bargain, for he is boding himself, and all his Salvation, upon you this Day: To him does the Salvation of People belong, therefore let the Gathering of the People be to him. 5thly, *To him must the Gathering of the People be*, because to him is the Gift of the People made. God the Father hath made a Gift of the People to him, therefore the People must be gathered to him. The Father bids him ask the People, and he should have them, *Psal. ii. 8. Ask of me, and I'll give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Ends of the Earth for thy Possession.* There is indeed a select Number that were given to him from Eternity, *John vi. 37. All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, that is, all that were given to him shall be gathered to him: And, that none of all the People that hear the Gospel may exclude themselves, as if they were not given; therefore it follows, *Him that comes I will in nowise cast out*, all Comers are welcome. It is as if Christ had said to these final Rejecters of him, I would have gathered you, but you would not, you never had so much as a Will to be gathered, you would not; but be it known, to your Confusion, that tho' you reject and despise me, yet I'll have a Gathering of the People to me, all that the Father hath given me shall be gathered to me: And tho' none will be gathered, but these that were given, yet this Giving is not put in as a Bar to your Coming, but rather as an Encouragement thereto; therefore it is remarkable, he does not add, him that *was given* I'll in nowise cast out, but him *that comes* I'll in nowise cast out, intimating, That as this Giving is not the Primary Object of Faith, so it cannot be seen or known, but in the

Way

Way of Coming; and they have this Encouragement to come, that in coming they may know they were given to me. They that have no Will to be gathered, cannot know they were given; but all that would be gathered, may be sure they were given: Therefore let this be a Ground for the Gathering of the People to him, that as the People to be gathered were given to him from Eternity, so they that would be gathered may know and be assured, that they were given to him, *John xvii. 6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* They were thine by Election, and thou gavest them me, to be redeemed by me. O happy People, whom a Day of Power hath made so willing, that indeed they would be gathered to *Shiloh*! They may know that they were in God's Hand from Eternity, and out of God's Hand they were put as a Compliment into Christ's Hand, if I may so express it; and indeed he is infinitely well pleased with the Compliment, he takes an Armsful of them, as it were, out of God's everlasting Arms, and he hugs them in his Bosom, for his Delights were with the Sons of Men; and whenever he sees the Travel of his Soul, he is satisfied; and when he hath hugged them in his redeeming Arms, till he hath justified, sanctified, and completely saved them, then he will give them back to the Father's Hand again, presenting them blameless to him, saying, *Behold I, and the Children which thou hast given me.* There must then be a Gathering of the People to him, because there was a Giving of the People to him. A poor Compliment, you may think with Wonder, of the like of me, to pass betwixt the Hands of the eternal Father, and his eternal Son, in Concurrence with the eternal Spirit, One God in Three Persons: But little Matter how poor and mean the Compliment seem to be, and really is in itself, if God be glorified, and *Shiloh* magnified, and you saved. O, let the Consideration of what a large Dominion, from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth, is given to Christ; yea, a numberless Number, that no Man can number, of all Nations,

ons, and Kindreds, and Tongues, and People, that shall stand before the Throne of the Lamb, with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands, Rev. vii. 9. saying, *Salvation to our God, that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*; Let the View of that innumerable Multitude of People that are given to him, stir up and provoke the Gathering of the People to him: He is come to demand what was given him. But then again, 6thly, *To him must the Gathering of the People be*, because, as the People are given to him, so he is given to the People for this End, that the Gathering of the People may be to him: And hence, to all the People of the visible Church, it is said, *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given*, Isa. ix. 6. *whose Name is called WONDERFUL*, &c. I speak not here of his being given in actual Possession to Believers, they that take the Gift of God are possessed of it; but I speak even of a Giving in the Gospel-Dispensation and Offer, for no Man can receive what is not given: Receiving supposes Giving, and Christ is so far given to all the Hearers of the Gospel, that they are obliged to receive him, and believe in him, upon Peril of Damnation; *He that believes not shall be damned*. Thus he is given to many that reject him; Hence, says Christ, to these that were rejecting him, *John vi. 32. My Father gives you the true Bread from Heaven*, that is, in Order to be received by you; for, in rejecting of this Bread that my Father gives you, your Souls will starve. This will aggravate the Damnation of the Damned, that Christ was given to them in the Gospel-Offer, and they rejected the Gift of God: However, the good News of the Gospel is, *John iii. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him, or gathers in to him, may not perish, but have everlasting Life*. This Reason, for the Giving of the People to *Shiloh*, is imported in the very Bosom of the Text; *Shiloh* is come to you, that you may come to him; he is come in the Flesh, he is come in the Gospel, and may we hope he is come in the Spirit; h

is come to the People, that the People may be gathered to him; and he is come as a *Shiloh*, that is, the *Messias*, the Sent of God, that the People may welcome God's Send saying, *Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord. To you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*; This is good Tidings to all People, *Luke ii. 10. To you is the Word of this Salvation sent*, *Acts xiii. 26.* Christ the *Shiloh* is the promised Seed, the leading Promise; and the Promise is to you, and to your Children, *Acts ii. 39.* that you may receive him in the Promise. He is the Sent of God to you, that you may gather to him; he is sent to be the Saviour of the People, the Helper of the People, and sent by Way of free Gift and Donation, *Isa. xli. 27. I will give to Jerusalem One that brings good Tidings*; and for what is he given to the People? See *Isa. 55. 4.* He is given to be a Witness to the People, and a Leader and Commander to the People: Yea, *Isa. xlii. 6. He is given for a Covenant of the People*; And why is he thus given to the People, but that the Gathering of the People may be to him? The People then are promised to him, and he is promised to the People; and therefore there must be a Gathering of the People to him. *Shiloh* is come to seek the People that were promised and given to him; let the People seek that *Shiloh*, that is promised and given to them. In a Word, he is the true Temple, to which the Gathering must be; He is the Mercy-Seat, at which God and the People may meet together; and you cannot meet with God but in him, for in him alone God is well pleased: And when you gather in to him, you win in to the Heart of God; for he lies in the Father's Bosom, being his Elect, in whom his Soul delights. So much for the Reasons.

APPLICATION.

I have endeavoured, in the Doctrinal Part, all along to deliver the Matter in a practical and applicatory Strain, and also enlarged it so much, that I need the less to insist upon many Inferences, wherein I have already anticipated my self. The main Uses I design
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are for Information of some Truths, and Exhortation to some Duties.

First, For INFORMATION. Is it so, that the Counsel of Heaven hath determined concerning Christ the Messias, that to him shall the Gathering of the People be? Hence see, 1. The doleful State of the Jews at present, and the lamentable Circumstances they have been in ever since the Coming of *Shiloh* their promised Messias. While a Multitude of Gentiles, that were but Dogs, are gathered to God's House, and they in the mean Time unchurched and cast out, tho' to them pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the Giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises; and tho' of them, as concerning the Flesh, *Shiloh* came, even Christ, who is over all God blessed for ever, *Rom. ix. 4, 5.* tho' they were the People of his first Love, the Seed of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, to whom so many precious Promises were made in Behalf of their Seed: Behold, their *Shiloh* comes to them, and they will not have him; *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* They owned the Sceptre was departed from *Judah*, when they said, *We have no King but Cesar*; and so, by their own Confession, *Shiloh* was come, since the Sceptre was departed from *Judah*. And, because they would not submit to the spiritual Sceptre of the promised *Messias*, they have been without a King, without a Prince, without a Sceptre or Lawgiver, without a Governor and Government, for 1700 Years and more, even since *Shiloh* came, to whom there is a Gathering of other People in their Room. O shall we not lament their long continued Rejection? Their Seventy Years Captivity in *Babylon* was nothing to this, yea, their Four hundred and thirty Years Bondage in *Egypt* was nothing to this! O how long, how long shall his Anger last against that People! how long shall they be under the Guilt of that Blood of Christ, which they imprecated upon themselves and their Posterity, saying, *His Blood be upon us and upon our Children!* O pray, pray for that ancient People of God,

God, and that the Blood of *Shiloh* may cleanse them from that Blood-guiltiness. When they were in Favour with God, the Believers among them had Mind of us poor Gentiles, when we were the *little Sister that had no Breasts*, Song viii. 8. and now, when we are sucking at the Breasts of Gospel-ordinances and Sacramental Solemnities, O shall we not mind them, when their Breasts are cut off, when they that were the natural Branches are broken off, and we that were the wild Olive-tree are grafted in to partake of the Root and Fatness of the good Olive-tree, *Rom. xi. 17, 24.* O let us not boast against the Branches; *For if thou boastest, thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee.* See v. 18, 19, 20, 21. Let us not boast, but let us beg, that they may be again grafted in; *For if the Casting away of them be the Reconciling of the World, what shall the Receiving of them be but Life from the Dead?* v. 15. The Day of the Return and Conversion of the Jews will be a Day of greater Gathering to *Shiloh*, even among the Gentiles, than we have yet seen; and it would fare better with us, if we were more employed in praying for them. Mean Time, this dark and doleful Dispensation, that as yet they are under, was not darkly foretold in the Words of our Text, That, upon the Sceptre's departing from *Judah*, *Shiloh* the Messias should come, and to him should the Gathering of the People be, that is, the Gentiles; plainly intimating a wonderful Mystery of Providence, that the King of the Jews should come to the Gentiles, and be crowned King among them, that so the Jews might have it to say at length, That the King of the Gentiles is become the King of the Jews; as well as the Gentiles have it to say, That the King of the Jews is become the King of the Gentiles. Therefore, 2dly, Hence see the sovereign Mercy of God in Christ towards the poor Gentile Nations, and the Isles of the Gentiles not forgotten; for he particularly promises, that *the Isles shall wait for his Law*, Isa. xlii. 4. And O wonder, that we in this remote Island were in his View, when he promised that *to him should the Gathering*

the People be. *Jacob*, by Inspiration of the Spirit of God, said it on his Death bed, and it is now more than 3000 Years ago; that is indeed to him not so much as three Days, for *to him a thousand Tears are as one Day*, &c. Thousands of Years intervening cannot make him forget his Promise; and, so far as there is or shall be a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, so far does this Promise take Effect. There was a Promise of this, more ancient yet, *Gen. ix. 27. God shall enlarge, or perswade Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem*: There, is a Promise that the Gentiles should be gathered in to partake of the Privileges of the Jews, for of *Japhet* came the Gentiles, and among his Posterity were the Isles of the Gentiles divided; see *Gen. x. 1, 2, 5*, and probably this Island among the rest. For confirming whereof, I shall not be positive in averring what some alledge, That as *Gomer* was the eldest Son of *Japhet*, and of him came the People called *Gomeri* or *Cymbri*; so the first Inhabitants of this Island of *Britain* came of the Posterity of *Japhet*, one of the Sons of *Noah*, namely of the said *Japhet's* eldest Son *Gomer*; and hence from *Gomeri* came *Cambria*, which is the *Latine* Name of *Wales* in this Island to this Day, to which Place the antient *Britons* retired at the Coming in of the *Saxons*: Hence they suppose, that the Isle of *Britain* is particularly intended here. But I shall not found any certain Conclusion upon a doubtful Supposition, tho' it be generally agreed to by some good Historians. We may see it plain from the Event, that God had a particular Design that there should be a Gathering of People to *Shiloh* in these Lands, and even in *Scotland*. I have shewed formerly, how early the Lord visited us with the Gospel, and that we were among the first of the Gentile Nations that ever were enlightened therewith, after Christ's Ascension, by which we were delivered from gross Paganism. And when I spoke of the remarkable gathering Seasons, I took Notice of our Reformation-days from Popery, and afterwards from Prelacy, our Covenanting-days, and the like; and therefore I am not here to insist thereupon

Only, as there have been remarkable gathering Times in *Scotland*, and as the Lord countenances yet the gathering Means and Ordinances among us; so we ought to bleſs him that ever Gospel-light ſhined upon us, and wait on him for more of that gathering Power of his Spirit, that *Scotland's* Barrenneſs now, and Unfruitfulneſs under the Means of Grace, may not provoke him wholly to leave us, and make our Name *Lo-ammi*, &c. 3dly, Hence ſee the Excellency of the Gospel, and Reason of the Efficacy thereof. Behold the Excellency of the Gospel, which brings the glad Tidings of a Saviour to the People, and of a gathering Place for the poor Gentiles, as well as the Jews; a God-Man, in whom God and Man might meet together, that ſcattered Sinners ſeparated from God might be gathered to him. Behold the Condeſcention of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt proclaimed in this Gospel, that he ſtoops ſo low as to be the gathering Room for poor ſinful People, to which they may reſort for Shelter and Salvation. *Shiloh* is come, he is come in our Nature, and with humane Nature he puts on humane Bowels, that into his very Boſom the Gathering of the People may be, that all the Good they have loſt may be found in Chriſt; yea, that the God whom they have loſt may be found in him, *For God is in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf*. But as herein we ſee the Excellency, ſo alſo behold the Efficacy of the Gospel, and the Power thereof: What was the Reason of the wonderful Spreading and Influence of the Gospel of Chriſt, eſpecially in the firſt Ages? It is a Matter for which no humane Policy can account, that the Gospel, preached in Simplicity, by Men of the meanest Character, ſhould make its Way through Forces of Devils and Men, ſhould gain ſo many Proſelytes, ſubdue ſo many Kingdoms. Had this Doctrine been ſuited to Fleſh and Blood, and, like *Mabomet's*, indulged Men in ſenſual Enjoyments, and promiſed afterwards the higheſt Degrees of ſenſual Pleaſures; had the Gospel been deſigned for increaſing the Stock of earthly Treafure, it
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were no Wonder that it should have gained so much Ground ; for all carnal Men would readily receive this Doctrine, and tenaciously retain it. Nay, had it proceeded upon rational Grounds and Foundations, some Philosophers, at least, would have embraced it. But, that a Doctrine, that teaches to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts ; a Doctrine, that teaches to crucify the old Man with his Affections and Lusts, the Lusts of the Eye, the Lusts of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life ; a Doctrine, that bids look to Things that are not seen ; a Doctrine, that bids us leave all Things, deny our selves, and count all but Loss and Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ ; That this Doctrine, however highly Rational, yet hath no Foundation in Reason, and admits Consequences of no rational Demonstration, many thereof being above the Reach of Reason ; that this Doctrine, that owes nothing to the Character of its Preachers, and owes as little to humane Force ; that this Doctrine should have gained so great a Ground, obtained so vast Success in a Time, wherein the Profession thereof did make the Professors of it to run the Risque of Poverty, Death and Disgrace : This is a Mystery, that none shall be able to unfold, but these who plow with this Gospel-hieffer, that the Gospel is the very Instrument of Divine Power, whereby he gathers the People to *Shiloh*. The Reason of this marvellous Dispensation is, That the omnipotent God, who can give a Being to his Word, hath past his Word, That to Christ shall the Gathering of the People be : And Divine Power, for effectuating this Design, is put forth in the Gospel ; which therefore, is called the Power of God to Salvation, while therein is revealed the Righteousness of God from Faith to Faith. And this Treasure is put in Earthen-vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of Man : And O that this Power were put forth on this Occasion, for gathering the People to *Shiloh*. 4thly, Hence see what ought to be the great Design of Peoples gathering to Gospel-ordinances ; the leading End is, what the Prophet

phet expresse, *Jer. 1. 5. They shall ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join our selves to the Lord ;* That is, let us gather together unto *Shiloh*; Let us lay our selves under the Influence of his gathering Power, and cast our selves into his gathering Arms, while he is stretching forth the Arms of his free Grace, in a preached Gospel. O Sirs ! what is the Design of these Gatherings of People together, if there be no gathering to *Shiloh* ? If we look to the Views and Designs of the most Part, we will find, That the Gathering to *Shiloh*, is least of all in their View. As there were wise Virgins and foolish, so there are wise Hearers and foolish; some come to Ordinances, only for a Name, because they would not be thought any worse than their Neighbours ; some come for Diversion, to spend an Hour or two in Hearing, because they have little else ado ; some come for Attendance Sake, because they are waiting on their Master or Mistress ; some come for Company's Sake, their Fellows saying, Let us go to Sermon ; Content, says the Other, and so they go for Company ; some come for Curiosity's Sake, they have heard People speak to the Praise, or Dispraise of such and such a Man, and they will see whether it be as they say ; some come for Carping and Cavilling, not to be judged by the Word, but to judge it, and censure it, being content to find some Word, that they reckon may be to the Minister's Prejudice, or Reproach ; and tho' they should forget all the rest of the Word, yet this they will mind, to report it to their Confidants, either out of Malice, because they receive not the Truth in the Love thereof, or out of Pride, because they would have Others, that hear their censorious Remarks, to esteem them to be judicious Persons, and competent Judges, while, in the mean Time, they are but bewraying their own Ignorance, Malice and Pride. Hence, some come to watch, if any Thing can be wrested, that is uttered, that they may act the Devil, in accusing the Brethren ; some gape for remarkable Phrases, that, when they come to their ordinary Compa-

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ny, they may have something to grace and adorn their Tales; some never come to hear what shall be said to themselves, and therefore never prick up their Ears till they suppose they hear the Minister exposing the Crimes of Others; some come to gaze, and look about them, to see who are there, and what's their Busk and Behaviour; some come to muse, and dream and rove, and if they notice any Word that is said, it will perhaps occasion a hundred impertinent Thoughts to keep out the rest of the Sermon, and the Mind will run a thousand Ways before it can get another Word noticed, and, may be, the Sermon is done before they can gather their Thoughts together again. Many such accidental Hearers there are, that gather to Ordinances, but not to *Shiloh*. They come to meet with their Friends, that it may be convene at such a Sermon, but not to meet with Christ. They are like Children that gather to a Market, and sit in the Market-place, but neither to buy nor sell. But as many Foxes have been taken, when they came to take, so some that have come only to spy Ferlies, yea, to scoff and scorn, have changed their Minds before they went Home. And O that Grace would come and catch some that are here, and yet are seeking nothing here, but, like Babes, to catch Butterflies! O that Christ, the greatest Treasure in the World, should be most despised, and that the Gospel-star, which should lead you to the Place where he is, that you may be gathered to him, that this Star should not be marked. *stbly*, Hence see what is the great Mark, at which Ministers of the Gospel should shoot, in dispensing thereof; why it is just the Gathering of Souls to Christ: To him shall the Gathering of the People be. Wo, wo to the Minister, whose great Design is only to gather a Multitude of People to himself, and enhance their Applause. It hath been indeed the Lot of some of the most faithful Ministers of Christ, to be thus reproached and calumniate, as if all their Design were to commend themselves to the Populace, and gather a Multitude to their Faction; they have been brand

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as Self-seekers, instead of being Soul-fishers ; and why? Because Providence hath commonly ordered, that those who have been most denied and mortified to Self, have been most followed ; but the more they were followed, the more they were envied by those that truly sought themselves : Hence, as none was more followed than Christ, so none was more envied by the Self-seeking Pharisees, *John xii. 19. Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the World is gone after him.* And as we read not that Christ reproved any for following him, tho' he reproved them for their false Ends in doing so ; *John vi. 26.* So, tho' no Gospel minister will be displeased, that he hath many Fishes before the Net, in Hopes that some may be gathered ; yet it is, and will be the Character of all faithful Ministers, which the Apostle relates, *2 Cor. iv. 5. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your Servants for Jesus Sake.* And *1 Cor. ii. 2. I determined to know, or, make known, nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* The great Gospel-design then is, to gather Souls to Christ, seeing they can never be happy or holy, but in him. And while you find that to be your Ministers great Scope, you ought to regard and hear them, as you would do a Voice from Heaven ; yea, and more, while they speak the Mind of God, from the Word of God, which is the more sure Word of Prophecy ; for it is the same as if you heard Christ himself : Therefore he says. *He that hears you, hears me ; and he that despises you, despises me.* If you truly regarded that Word of Christ, you would hear the Voice of the Preacher, as you would hear the Voice of God. If *Samuel* had thought it was God that spoke to him, he would not have slept but because he thought it was not God, but *Eli*, therefore he slept on. So, while People do not think it is God that speaks to them, but only a Man, they will never regard it, and never will there be a Gathering to *Shiloh*, till the Word be received, *Not as the Word of Man, (1 Thess. ii. 13.) but as it is in Truth*

the Word of God, which effectually works in you that believe. Where a' so that Question is obivate, How shall we know, when the Minister speaks his own Words, or God's Word? Why, let the Word of God be received, and it will speak for it self, for it will effectually work in you that believe: And when the Words of one Preacher seem to clash with the Words of Another, this effectual working of the Word will teach you how to judge Things that differ really, and how to prove all Things, and hold fast that which is good. The great Mark then, I say, that the Gospel-minister aims at, is the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*; and the Pointing out of Christ to them, for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. Surely, my Friends, we know no other Way to save you, nor our selves; if we did, how wretched were we to keep it from you? since we have no other Calling, but to shew you the Way of Salvation. 6thly, Hence, we may also see what is the Centre of all Gospel-truth, Christ is the Centre, wherein all the Lines of Evangelical Doctrine are gathered together, and do meet. It would not be the Duty of People, to believe in him, or gather to him by Faith, if he were not the Truth, as well as the Way; Yea, the Centre and Substance of all Truth: And that is not the Truth, that does not lead to him. Here is the most sure Test of Orthodoxy; whatever pretends to be the Truth, and yet tends only to lead a Man in to himself, and not out of himself to Christ; whatever Doctrine tends to make you think, you must produce some Holiness or good Qualifications from within your self, without gathering first to *Shiloh*, to get it, you may know it is not orthodox Doctrine: Whatever Doctrine tends to the Disparagement of Christ or to the Robbing him of any Part of the Glory of Salvation-work, is to be rejected, as Erroneous; for, *To him alone must the Gathering of the People be*: And to him only shall the Glory of our whole Salvation, from First to Last, belong. Christ is much robbed of his Glory in *Britain*, at this Day; damnable *Arian* Doctrine is spreading, whereby Christ is robbed of the Glory of his

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his supreme Deity, denying his being the eternal Son of God, co-equal, and co-essential with the Father. The Devil himself was more orthodox than our *Arian* Doctors, when he owned, *Mat. viii. 29.* that Christ was the Son of God, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?* The Devil spoke more honourably of him, than they do, when he said, *Mark i. 24. I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God.* My Text leads me to what I am saying; for, if Christ were not the supreme God, equal with the Father, the Gathering of the People to him, to believe in him, to worship and adore him, would be unlawful; it would be Idolatry. For, as the Lord our God is one Lord, so we must worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve; and it is Idolatry to worship any Other. Yea, to the Son, he says, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*; and for this End, must all the People be gathered to him. My present Work allows me not to trace the other Doctrines, that rob him of his Glory, and tend to lead People elsewhere than to *Shiloh*: Only, whatever Mask of Truth or Holiness, any Doctrine shall put on, if it tend to gather People to *Moses*, and not to *Shiloh*, or to lead them to the Law, and not to Christ, who is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every One that believeth, it savours not of the Truth as it is in Jesus, *Eph. iv. 21.* But the main Inference I designed at present, was for Exhortation; and therefore, passing all other Inferences that might be drawn, I come to apply it,

Secondly, For EXHORTATION. And I design, as the Lord may pity and assist, to direct it to three Sorts of Persons, with Relation to this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. *1st*, Some may be doubtful, whether they were ever gathered to *Shiloh*, or not; therefore I would exhort them to try. *2dly*, Some may be sure they were never yet gathered to *Shiloh*, therefore I would exhort them to gather under his Wings. *3dly*, Some are Believers, that have through Grace been gathered by him, and made to gather to him; and I

would exhort them to their Duty, with Respect to their further Gathering to him.

1st, Some may be doubtful, whether they were ever gathered to *Shiloh*, or not; and therefore my Exhortation to such, is, That they would try and examine, whether it be so, or not. Examination is a necessary Duty at all Times, as well after, as before a Communion. He that says, with Reference to the Sacrament, Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat, says also, with Reference to any Season, *Examine yourselves, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. whether you be in the Faith, prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* O poor dying Mortal! will you try if you have been gathered to *Shiloh*, or not? Whether you have win into him by a Faith of his own Operation? For according as this takes Place, so will it fare with you through all Eternity. If you die out of Christ, or in Unbelief, you die in your Sins, *John viii. 24.* And better die in a Ditch, and die like a Dog, than die in your Sins. If you die in your Sins, you'll rise in your Sins, and stand before the Tribunal of God in your Sins, and so be condemned. If you be gathered to Christ, you will be found in him, and so found happy, when Death, Judgment and Eternity appear; therefore I exhort you solemnly to reflect upon this Matter, whether you be gathered, or not. If all that you're worth in a World lay in one precious Stone, and that Stone were to be tried by a skillful Jeweler, whether it were true or false, whether it would fly, or endure under the smart Stroke of his Hammer; surely, your Thoughts would not be unconcerned about the Issue of such a Trial. Why, Man, Woman, all that you're worth in this World, and the World to come, depends upon this Matter, whether you be of the People that are gathered to *Shiloh*, or not. Try whether your Faith in the promised *Shiloh*, will fly, or endure the Stroke of the Hammer of God's Word: Have you no Concern in this Matter? You would be loth to put to Sea, tho' it were but to cross a narrow Ferry, in a row

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ten leaky Vessel; and will you dare to venture on the Ocean of Eternity, in a false rotten Barque? Whatever Profession you have, whatever Blaze you make, whatever Esteem Others may have of you, whatever Opinion you may have of your self, and of your Faith, you'll be drowned for ever in the Deluge of God's Wrath, if you be not gathered in to the Ark, Jesus Christ: I would therefore offer you some Helps to make this Trial. And here all that I said upon the 4th Head, concerning the Means and Manner of this Gathering, how God acts in gathering, and how he makes the Soul to act, might be brought in; but, passing all these, I offer these few following Marks, by which you may try whether or not, you have ever been gathered to *Shiloh*.

(1.) If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then *Shiloh* hath come to you, before ever you was gathered to him. The Text makes the Coming of *Shiloh* to be the very Cause of the Gathering of the People to him: As his Coming in the Flesh did usher in the Gathering of the Gentiles, so it is his Coming in the Spirit that makes the spiritual Gathering to him. Try then, if ever he hath come to you. Surely, if you be gathered to him, you can say, I would never have come to him, unless he had come to me: Now, if Christ never came to you by his Spirit, as a Spirit of Conviction, convincing you of Sin and Misery, and discovering your Need of Christ, and that you was lost for ever without him, surely you have not yet been gathered to him. You that never yet had a sorrowful Hour for want of Christ: and was never brought to a *Wo's me, for I want Christ and Salvation*, nor to a *What shall I do to be saved*: you have Reason to conclude that you was never yet gathered to him: For, when he comes by his Spirit, he convinces the World of Sin; when he gathers the People to him, he comes and convinces them of Sin, because they believe not in him, *John xvi. 8*. Some never wanted Faith, which declares they never had it; they never miss'd Christ, which says they never matched with him. As he that was never

a real Wanter, was never a real and true Suiter; so it is the needy Wanter that is the steady Suiter. Thus here, Man, Woman, if you had never a Want of Christ, you was never in Suit of him, never gathered to him: Tho' he hath been in Suit of you by the Gospel-offer may be a Thousand Times, yet you being pleased with your old Match, your Sins, Lusts, Idols, Self-righteousness, or the World; his Suit was never regarded, because you was never a Wanter; and being never a true Wanter, you was never a true Seeker or Receiver of him, and so never gathered to him: For you was never convinced of your Want of Christ, and Want of Faith in him. Deceive not your self, O Sinner; you was never a Believer, if you was never a Wanter; if the Spirit of Conviction never came and made you say, O I want Grace, I want Holiness, I want Faith, Love, Repentance and all Good; yea, I want God, I want Christ, I want the Spirit. Hence it is the Property of a Believer, notwithstanding all he gets, yet he is ay a Wanter, ay poor and needy, and nothing in himself: And it is the Property of an Unbeliever, notwithstanding all that he wants, yet he is ay *rich, and increased with Goods, and wants nothing*; hence we find some ignorant People expressing what Others that pretend to more Knowledge do conceal: Ask them, Do you want Faith? O no, we ay trusted in God. Do you want Hope? No, we hope in his Mercy. Do you want Love? No, I had ay a Love to God and his People all my Days. Do you want Grace? Nay, God forbid that I should be altogether graceless. Do you want Christ? O no, my sweet Saviour, what would come of me if I wanted Christ? Why, Man, Woman, I know nothing that you want, you're not a Wanter: The Lord pity you; for, what you dream you never wanted, you never had to this Day. The Spirit of Conviction hath never come, and, instead of being gathered to *Shiloh*, you was never yet gathered to the Porch-door of true Christianity; for the Spirit's Coming to convince of the Want of Christ, and of Faith in him, is the very Beginning of all true Religi-

on. But if *Shiloh* hath come by his Spirit, and shew-
you your Want of all Things but Sin, it is a good Be-
ginning; for thus he gathers you out of your false
Hopes and lying Refuges. But next, If *Shiloh* hath
come to you for gathering you to himself, then he hath
come not only as a Spirit of Conviction, but also as a
Spirit of powerful Illumination, discovering the Glory
of *Shiloh* to you, even the Glory of his Person, Offi-
ces, Righteousness, Fulness, and other Things of
Christ, so as to glorify Christ in your View, *John* xvi.
14. *He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine,*
and shew it unto you. Now, if *Shiloh* never came by his
Spirit in the Gospel, to shew something of the Glory
of Christ to you, and the Glory of God's Perfections
in him, so as to make him appear more glorious to
you than all the World, it seems you have not yet been
gathered; For if our Gospel be bid, it is bid to them
that are lost, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. *In whom the God of this*
World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe
not, &c. But if ever you was gathered, then the God
who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness hath
shined into your Hearts, to give the Light of the kno-
ledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ,
ver. 6. For as, when the Lord builds up Zion, he
appears in his Glory; so, when he gathers Souls, he
appears in his Glory, and brings them from Darkness
to his marvellous Light. I do not speak of the highest
Degree of spiritual Light, nor yet of any extraordinary
Manifestations; all that I mean is, the Spirit's coming
to enlighten your Minds in the Knowledge of Christ,
whereby you have seen his Glory, as the Glory of the
only Begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth,
and have seen a Fulness of all Grace in him. These are
not enthusiastical Delusions, but scriptural Expressions:
For, may One think or say, What is that the Man is
speaking, of beholding such a Glory? I never saw any
greater Glory in all the World than that of the Sun,
Moon, and Stars in the Firmament. What say you,
Man? Saw you never any greater Glory than that
which your bodily Eyes have seen betwixt Earth and
Heaven?

Heaven? Then I may say to you, that you was never yet gathered to *Shiloh*; for he never came in his Spirit to shew you his *Glory*. I speak not of weak powerless Fancies and Imaginations that some may have of Christ's *Glory*, but I call it a powerful Illumination, conquering the Will, and captivating the Heart, and carrying in all the Affections to the Embracing of Christ; for when the Sun of Righteousness arises, it is with Healing under his Wings, healing the Resistance of the Will, and the Hardness of the Heart, and melting down the whole Soul in the warm Arms of his gathering Grace and Love, while he draws with Loving-kindness. And indeed, *No Man can come to me*, says Christ, *except the Father which hath sent me draw him*; and saving Discoveries are of a drawing Nature. The true Sun hath not only Light, but Heat, whereby the Heart is warmed; and the true Light is the Light of Life, whereby the Soul is quickened. If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then know it, that *Shiloh* hath come to you before ever there could be a Gathering to him.

(2.) If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then as *Shiloh* hath come to you, so you have been made particularly to come to him, under the drawing Power and Influence of that Spirit I have been speaking of. And indeed, as none can come unless he draw them, so none can stay away when he is drawing them: And hence every Believer finds, that as it is impossible to believe till Power come, so it is impossible not to believe when Divine Power does come; it is as easy then, as it was difficult before. If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then as the Coming of *Shiloh* to you hath prevented your Coming to him, so your Coming to him hath been effectuate by his Coming to you, and making the general Call of the Gospel effectual, in enabling you to a particular Application, so as to give a particular Answer to the general Call. If you have been but Hearers of the Word all your Days, without ever applying it to your own Use, and Hearers of the general Offer and Promise of Christ, without ever seeing your selves

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involved, inclosed and included in the general Promise and Offer, and without ever making a particular personal Application thereof, you are not yet gathered to *Shiloh*; for, when Souls are gathered, the general Call gets a particular Answer, *Psal. xxvii. 8. When thou saidst, Seek ye my Face; my Heart said, Thy Face, Lord, will I seek.* The Gospel-call is general, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*; but the Answer must be particular, *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief.* When People suffer Gospel-truths to hover in the Brain, without Application, or learn Things as Children do their Catechism by Rote, never reflecting, What am I doing? where am I going? what will become of me? and what Effect hath this Word upon me? Unbelief remains undisturbed, the Word comes and goes, and there is no Good done, no Gathering to *Shiloh*, because no particular Application. It is the very Design of the Spirit's convincing and inlightning Work, to bring the Soul to this particular Application of Christ; and therefore this Mark may clear the former. It you think, How shall I know if I have such a Measure of Conviction and Illumination as is sufficient to evidence that I am gathered to *Shiloh*? Why, any Measure that God pleases to give is enough, if it issue in the Soul's particular Reception and Application of Christ. When is it that the Mettal is melted enough in the Fire? Why, it is melted enough when it runs easily into the Mould. Now, there may be natural Meltings, under the common Influences of the Spirit: But, when is the Soul melted enough with the Beams of the Sun of Righteousness, or with the Fire of the Spirit? Why, it is melted enough when it runs into the Gospel-mould. There are some that have as it were too much of the Fire; these are they that apprehend themselves such great Sinners, that they *dare* not come to Christ: There are others that have as it were too little of the Fire; these are they that only think they are not so good as they ought to be, and therefore they *should* not come to Christ: There are others that have nothing of the Fire at all, and these are they that think they are

good enough already, and they *need* not come to Christ: But then only is the Soul sufficiently melted, when it runs in to the Mould. What is the Gospel-mould? It is even Christ; and when the melted Soul runs in to this Mould, there does it get the right Shape and Form, and there only. As it is not the Melting of the Mettal that gives it a Shape, Fashion or Form, but the Mould that gives it the Form; so never expect to have any good Form, any good Shape, any good Qualification, till your Souls run in to this Mould. It is the very Design of the Spirit's Coming to ding People out of their own fancied Goodness, and make them come to Christ for all. Try then, if ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, by this, namely, Whether your Soul, in a Day of Divine Power, was made to run in to him like melted Lead in to a Mould, closing with, and cleaving to him by a particular Application. But how the Soul acts here, by a particular Appropriation and fiducial Perswasion, upon the Divine Word, under Divine Conduct, I have formerly described; therefore I proceed to another Mark.

(3.) If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then the gathering Place will be very precious to you, I mean the promised *Shiloh*, Christ himself, 1 *Pet.* ii. 7. There he is: he'd forth as the chief Corner-stone, to which all the Stones of the spiritual Building are gathered together, and unite; and to all such as are gathered to him, it is declared, he is precious. And the Word signifies, he is honourable, he is an Honour to them, and they put Honour upon him, and entertain him honourably, in a Suitableness to his high Quality, as he is God-Man, and particularly, as he is the *Shiloh*, that is, the Messias, the Sent of God, the Father's extraordinary Ambassador. Some esteem Christ, but not according to his Grandeur and Glory, and therefore, it is evident, they are not gathered to him, as the *Shiloh*, the Sent of God; but they that are gathered to him, they receive, esteem, and entertain him, according to his Dignity. If a Subject shall receive, or entertain his Prince, or the King's extraordinary

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Ambassador, no otherwise than he would do his Country Neighbour, this would be interpreted a Contempt: So, if Christ be not received, esteemed and entertained, according to his Grandeur, Dignity and State, he counts it a Contempt, rather than a due Reception or Estimation of him. If Christ be not esteemed as a King, he is but disesteemed; if he be not honoured as the Father's Ambassador-Extraordinary, he is but dishonoured: For, as *Shiloh*, he hath Heaven's sealed Commission, *Him hath God the Father sealed*. The Unbelieving *Jews* were content to receive and esteem Christ as a great Prophet, as the *Mahometans* do; but they would not receive and entertain him according to his Greatness, Grandeur and Glory, which he was invested with; therefore they were challenged as Rejecters and Despisers of him, *Acts* xiii. 41. *He came to his own, and his own received him not*; For they did not receive him, as the Son of God, and the Sent of God: Whereas, it is said of the Believing *Jews*, who received Christ, That they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, that is, they so received him in all his Glory, Grandeur, Majesty and Splendour, that they esteemed honourably of him. Hence, says Christ, *Jhn* xvii. 8. *They have known that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me*. If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then you esteem honourably of him, as he is the glorious *Shiloh*, the Sent of God. Is Christ thus precious to you, and honourable?

(4.) If you be gathered unto *Shiloh*, then you will be clothed with him, for he is sent to be a Robe of Righteousness; and all that are gathered to him, do put on that Mantle, and gather in under that Cover, and in that Clothing do they stand perfectly Righteous in the Sight of God; being accepted as Righteous in his Sight, only for the Righteousness of Christ. Hence, it is given as a Mark of the true Church and Children of God, that are gathered to Christ, that they are clothed with the Sun, *Rev.* xii. 1. It is indeed called a great Wonder, for the Mystery of free

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(4.) If you be gathered unto *Shiloh*, then you will be clothed with him, for he is sent to be a Robe of Righteousness; and all that are gathered to him, do put on that Mantle, and gather in under that Cover, and in that Clothing do they stand perfectly Righteous in the Sight of God; being accepted as Righteous in his Sight, only for the Righteousness of Christ. Hence, it is given as a Mark of the true Church and Children of God, that are gathered to Christ, that they are clothed with the Sun, *Rev.* xii. 1. It is indeed called a great Wonder, for the Mystery of free

and perfect Justification, and of being clothed with a perfect Righteousness, is such a Mystery, that natural Men cannot conceive it, nor believe it, tho' a Man should declare it to them, as the Apostle speaks, *Act. xiii. 41.* Yea, the Believer himself cannot believe it, without holy Wondring, and joyful Trembling, *Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9.* This Wonder is said to be of a Woman in Heaven, that is, the Church-Militant, and every particular Believer under a Gospel-Dispensation, wherein there is a full Revelation of this Righteousness. Now, here it is said also, she was clothed with the Sun, that is, with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; the Woman being married to Christ, as the Lord her Righteousness, she is as it were gathered in to the Sun in the Firmament, and so clothed with the perfect Righteousness of Christ; That however black and dark she is in her self, yet, in Point of Justification, this Sun, wherewith she is clothed, makes her shine in a perfect Righteousness, as gloriously in God's Eyes, as the bodily Sun shines gloriously in our Eyes, when it shines in its meridian Splendour. The Believer is not only fair as the Moon, in the Sight of Men, in Point of Sanctification; which Moon, may be indeed, and is full of Spots, and very changeable; But clear as the Sun, in the Sight of God, in Point of Justification; the Sun of Righteousness, with which he is clothed, being perfectly glorious. *Quest.* But, if this be a Mark of One that is gathered, that he is clothed with the Sun of Righteousness; how shall I examine my self by this, or know that I am thus clothed? Why, you may examine it by what follows. If you be clothed with the Sun, then you have got the Moon under your Feet, and upon your Head a Crown of twelve Stars. Have you got the Moon under your Feet? What is that? I find some understand two Things by it; the One is the Moon of your own Righteousness, and the Other is the Moon of the World. As to the Former then, if you be gathered to Christ, and clothed with the Sun of Righteousness, then you have got the Moon of your own

Righteousness

Righteousness under your Feet ; That is, you'll make
 no Account of your own Righteousness of Sanctifi-
 cation before God, in Comparison of the Garment
 of Christ's Righteousness, which is the Sun, that
 you're so gloriously clothed with. Nay, when your
 own Righteousness or Graces put in for any Share of
 Justification before God, you'll, in this Respect, tram-
 ple them under your Feet as a menstruous Cloth,
 as the Prophet *Isaiah* did, *Isa. lxi. 6. All our*
Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags. Yea, when it claims
 to be a Righteousness, before an infinitely holy and
 just God, you'll trample it under your Feet as Dung, as
 the Apostle *Paul* did, *Phil. iii. 8. Yea, doubtless, I count*
all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge
of Christ ; yea, I do count them but Dung, that I may
win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine
own Righteousness, that is after the Law, but that
which is thro' Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which
is of God by Faith. This he speaks not only of his
 Pharisaical Righteousness before his Conversion, but
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 sion. The Man that is clothed with the Sun of
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 ousness. It is not Gain, but Loss, because, as *Chry-*
ostome, one of the Fathers, says, *When the Sun shines,*
it is but Loss to sit by a Candle-light ; Why, be-
 cause his Righteousness is God's Righteousness. God
 is the Worker of it ; and, in Comparison thereof, our
 best Righteousness, whereof we are the Workers, e-
 ven with Divine Assistance, is but Dung to be tram-
 pled upon, when it competes with the Other, or would
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 before God. If you be clothed with the Sun then,
 and be thus gathered to *Shiloh*, you have got this
 Moon under your Feet ; and whatever Light of Sancti-
 fication you have, it will flow from your Justifica-
 tion, as the Light of the Moon does come from the
 Sun ; and as the Moon gives Light in the dark Night,
 so will the Moon of your Sanctification give Light
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to other Men, walking in the dark Night of this World : Your Light will so shine before Men, that that they seeing your good Works, may glorify God. And here is a Mystery in the Believer's Life ; he shines like the Moon, in Point of Sanctification, doing all the good Works he can, that he may glorify God, and edify his Neighbour in the World ; and yet he keeps this Moon of his own Works and Righteousness under his Feet, and tramples upon it, in the Matter of Justification, because, in that Respect, his only Clothing is the Sun of Righteousness. Again, as to the other Sense, if you be clothed with the Sun, and gathered to *Shiloh*, then you'll have the Moon of this World under your Feet ; the Profits, Honours, and Pleasures of the World, which being changeable and unconstant as the Moon, the Believer hath it under his Feet ; because, being clothed with the glorious Sun of Righteousness, and thereby discerning the Glory of God and Christ, and heavenly Things, he cannot but despise and undervalue all earthly Things, when coming in Competition with heavenly ; as *Moses* did, *Heb. xi. 25, 26.* when he vilified all the Glory and Grandeur of *Pharaoh's* Court, &c. You that had never the Moon of this World under your Feet, but have the World in your Heart, and nothing but the World, surely you are not gathered unto *Shiloh* ; for they that are gathered to him, they are gathered out of the World, and set apart from the rest of the World ; they are not of the World, but chosen out of the World. Hence, they that are gathered to *Shiloh*, are brought off from their old worldly Companions : There are sinful Gatherings, wicked Clubs and Cabals, that will be hateful to them ; of which, their Heart will say, as *Jacob* said of *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Gen. xlix. 6.* *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, to their Assembly, mine Honour, be thou not united ;* and with *David*, *Psal. xxvi. 9.* *Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* If you belong to these drunken, tippling, idle and debauched Gatherings ; you may be sure, that you are not gathered

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thered unto *Shiloh*. The Godly may indeed fall in-
to such Company, but it is not their Element to em-
brace their Society : Nay, Fellowship with the
Saints, the excellent Ones of the Earth, is their De-
light ; and Fellowship with the Wicked, is so far from
being their Delight, that their Society is rather a
Burthen, and brings them to a *Wo is me, wo is me,*
that I sojourn in Meshech, &c. I had rather be a
Door-keeper, &c. Now see to it, if you be not ga-
thered out of the World, you're not yet gathered to
Shiloh : For, if you be clothed with the Sun then you
have the Moon of this World under your Feet, and
upon your Head a Crown of twelve Stars : That is,
the Doctrine of the Gospel, delivered by the twelve
Apostles, and preached by Gospel-ministers, which
are called Stars in his right Hand, will be your
Crown, a golden Crown to you : Yea, his Word
will be to you, as more to be desired than Gold, yea,
than much fine Gold. And this leads me to another
Mark of those that are gathered to *Shiloh*.

(5.) If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then gathering
Means and Ordinances will be always desirable to
you ; for they that are gathered, will be always a ga-
thering to him, till they be for ever with him, in the
full and immediate Enjoyment of him ; now try
your self by this Mark. I enlarge a little upon
each, because I design not to multiply Particulars.
If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then the gathering
Means will be desirable to you : Now, what Con-
science do you make of the Means ? For there is a
Generation, that boldly say, they have Religion, yet
they use not duly, either publick, private, or se-
cret Means. If ever you be gathered to Christ, all
the gathering Means, all his Ordinances will be sweet
to you ; you will seek him where he is to be found,
not only in the City, about the Streets and Broad-
ways, among the Watch men, but a little further,
Song iii. 2, 3, 4. They that never used Means, were
never gathered ; they that are gathered, are ay en-
deavouring to improve them, because they are ay
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gathering to him; therefore try your selves here further, on [this Score, and see where you are, in *Shiloh*, or not. If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, you will be ay gathering to him, and living on him; for such are not of those that draw back to Perdition, but of those that believe, to the Saving of their Souls. They that go out from him, were never of him; therefore says Christ to his Disciples, *Will ye also go away?* *John* vi. 67. To which, the true Believer's Answer is, *Lord, To whom shall we go, thou hast the Words of eternal Life?* v. 68. Let me therefore ask you, whether or not you mind to bide with Christ? Surely, if you be gathered to him, you resolve, thro' Grace, to bide with him, and to be still coming to him, *1 Pet.* ii. 4. and as *new born Babes, desiring the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* Indeed, they that abide with Christ cannot but grow; and this I say, to find out Hypocrites, that (it may be) use the outward Means, and resolve, in their Fashion, they will abide with Christ; That is, they will not turn Papists or Malig-nants, turn who will and yet know not what it is to be ay gathering to, and growing in the Lord Je-sus. I know that Saints have their Winter-blasts, that set them back, but they have also their Summer-blinks, to set them forward again, and make them grow in Knowledge, Faith, Love, and Experience; or else, for want of this Growth, they are always quar-reling themselves: But, for other Professors, that ne-ver were rooted in Christ, they keep ay their old Stanse. Men would blush for Shame, to have it said to them, they are as foolish this Day, as they were this Day twenty Years; or, that they are as bad in their Callings, and as ill at their Trade, as when they began; and yet, in Christianity, many are as ill as they were thirty, forty, fifty Years since, as igno-rant of Christ and the Gospel, as great Strangers to Communion with God in Christ. Surely, they that are gathered to Christ, they will strive to win for-ward, the cannot get enough of him, but press to

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ward the Mark. They that have got enough of Christ, have got nothing as yet; and they that have got him, they may think they have got nothing; for what they have got, is nothing to what they see to be in him, and therefore they press forward, whenever they are themselves. And indeed, when you are not going forward, you're going backward. When a Man rows against the Stream, he holds up the Boat: but let him lay aside the Oars, he will go further down than he came up. Hence, gathered Souls are ay for making use of the Oars of gathering Means, that they may win forward: And hence, as God's gathering Means will be delightful, so the Devil's scattering Means will be hateful to him that is gathered; every Thing that tends to make a Separation betwixt Christ and him, will be uneasy, especially when he hath come any Speed at Ordinances: O to think of a Separation again, will be sad and sorrowful! Wo is me, that I am going back to a World of Sin, and Sinners, and Temptations again! Being gathered to him, he cannot think of being sundered from him.

(6.) If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then it will be your Desire and Endeavour to gather Others to him; the Soul that comes to Christ, will seek to draw Others after him, *John i. 45, 46.* Whenever Christ found Philip, Philip found Nathanael, and says, *We have found the Messias, O come and see him; John iv. 29.* When Christ manifested himself to the Woman of *Samaria*, she invites the Men of the City to come to him, *O come see a Man, that told me all things that ever I did.* Never a Soul was gathered to Christ but desired to gather Others, especially its Friends and Relations. The Parent that is in Christ, will be careful to gather his Children to Christ, the Master his Servant, *Gen. xviii. 19. I know,* says God of *Abraham*, *That he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord.* It is not possible, but that Soul that comes to Christ, and hath gotten a Draught of his free Love, if it could command ten thousand, it would command them to

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come to Christ. If you never had a Care or Concern this Way, to make these in your Family to know the Lord, you declare you was never gathered to him. But, you whose Soul's Desire is, to gather Others to Christ, you may be sure, concerning your self, that you're gathered to *Shiloh*. Now, if you try your selves impartially by these Marks, you may come to find whether you have been gathered to *Shiloh*, yea or not.

Second Sort then, that I would speak to, are some that may be sure, that they were never gathered to *Shiloh*; and it is to be feared, that Unbelievers make up the greatest Part of this Assembly: And therefore I must be allowed to speak, especially to them; and if Believers themselves give Ear, and the Lord concur with the Word of general Exhortation, they may get a new Grip of *Shiloh*, by the By. My Exhortation to the People in General, then, especially those that were never gathered unto Christ, is in the Words of the Prophet *Zeph. ii. 1. Gather your selves together, yea, gather together, O Nation not desired*; That is, either not desiring, even you that have no Desire towards God and Christ, and his Grace and Favour, but are very indifferent about it; or Nation not desirable, having nothing lovely or amiable about you, to recommend you to God: Yet, *O gather together, before the Decree bring forth, and before the fierce Anger of the Lord come upon you; for if once his Wrath begin to burn, blessed are all they that trust in him, and gather to him. Also, in the Words of the Prophet Isa. xlv. 20, 22. Assemble your selves, and come*; Why, what is that? It follows, *Look to me, and be saved, all the Ends of the Earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Shiloh is come, and he is come for the Salvation of the People. O let all the People say Amen, even so come Lord Jesus: Here is the Feast of fat Things, that the Lord of Hosts hath made on this Mountain, for all People, Isa. xxv. 6. Therefore let all the People assemble themselves and come, that they may eat and drink. I allude to Ezek. xxxix. 17. where God speaks to every feathered*

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Fowl, and every Beast of the Field, saying, *Assemble your selves and come, gather your selves on every Side to my Sacrifice, &c. that you may eat Flesh, and drink Blood.* Indeed, except you eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of God, you have no Life in you, *John vi. 53.* Therefore assemble your selves and come, gather to this great Sacrifice upon the Mountains of *Israel* for you; a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Savour to God. Here is the Carcase, O let the Eagles be gathered together. We must preach this Gospel to every Creature, every rational Creature; yea, to Men that have lost their Reason, and turned to Beasts: Every Beast of the Field, tame or wild, clean or unclean, *Acts x. 12.* What means the opening of the Heaven sthere, and the descending of the Sheet, the great Sheet knit at four Corners, containing all Manner of wild Beasts, and creeping Things, and Fowls of the Air? Why, the Meaning was, Go call all, and every One of the People. The Gentiles, some of them are creeping in the Dust, and wallowing in the Mire of sinful Lusts and Worldly-Mindedness; others are flying in the Air of Pride, Vainity and Selfishness: But, go you and call all the poor sinful Creatures within your Reach, whether they be creeping on the Earth, or flying in the Air; all the sinful House of *Adam*, are made up of such a Sort of People; but go, and tell them, that now *Shiloh* is come, and *To him must the Gathering of the People be.* Therefore, in the Name of the great *Shiloh*, and in his Father's Name, we invite and exhort all the People, that have hitherto been gathering to the Devil, and gathering to their Lusts, and gathering to the World, and gathering to their idle Cabals, and drunken Gossipings, sinful Diversions, and damnable Debaucheries, now to think in earnest of gathering unto *Shiloh*; for, *Shiloh* is come, and let the Gathering of the People be to him. Now, seeing nothing but Divine Almighty Power can gather Souls unto Christ; therefore, O Man, Woman, Lads, Lad, look to God for Power to accompany the Call; for the Gospel-call uses to be the Channel, in which Divine Power runs, for conquer-

ing Souls. And because, I know not, but this Power may accompany this Call, for making out the Promise in the Text that to him shall the Gathering of the People be: Therefore, I shall offer some Considerations, for pressing home this Exhortation upon the People.

First, Consider that *Shiloh* is come to the People, that the People may come to him; for this is what I mean, by gathering to him, namely, a Coming to him by Faith: And this Faith, you know, is a Receiving and Resting upon him for Salvation, as he is offered to you in the Gospel. Now, since he cannot be received, but in and by the Gospel-Offer, the Word of Grace, the Word of Promise in the Gospel: Therefore, to receive him, is to believe in him, *John* i. 12. As it is by Unbelief that we depart from him, *Heb.* iii. 12. *Take Heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the Living God:* So it is by believing in him that we gather to him; and to believe in him, is to credit the Record that God hath given of his Son; and this is the Record, that God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son; *He that does not thus believe, hath made God a Liar,* 1 *John* v. 10, 11. To come to him by Faith then, is to close with him in the Gospel-Record, and upon the Divine Testimony; to have alldivine Perswasion of the Truth and Goodness of the Gospel-Messsage, with particular Application to your self, saying, O here is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that *Jesus Christ* came to save Sinners, of whom I am the Chief, 1 *Tim.* i. 15. and so it is just a Taking him at his Word, and taking his Word of Grace, his Word of Honour for your Salvation, according to the Gospel-Offer of him. If you be saying then, that you cannot come to him by Faith, it may be very true, for indeed you cannot come, till he draw you, *John* vi. 44. You cannot believe, till the Spirit of Faith mix in with this Word of Grace; but do you know what you're saying, when you say you cannot come to him by Faith, tho' the Word of Grace came to you in particular, to be believed by you? You are

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saying, in Effect, that God is a Liar, I cannot take his Word for it, I cannot believe that he is speaking to me, or that he means any Good to me. *To you is the Word of this Salvation sent*, says the Gospel; *No*, says Unbelief, *never a Word of that is true, with Respect to me: Let them apply it to whom it is sent, but I cannot think it is to the like of me.* Wretch, you are calling the God of Truth a Liar: O Blasphemy! If it were not to you, your Unbelief would not be your Sin; but of all Sins it is the most damning, as well as the prolifick Womb that genders others Sins. However, *Shiloh* is come to you, that you may come to him; he came to his own, and his own, *to wit*, the *Jews*, received him not; intimating, that the Design of the Work, and Design of his Coming, was that they might come to him, receive him, and gather to him: And now he is come to you Gentiles, he is come to the People, and shall the People reject him too? He is come to us in the Flesh, by taking on our Nature; he is come to us in the Gospel, the Gospel-Offer, the Gospel-Call, the Gospel-Promise, the Gospel-Invitation; and tho' he should never come any other Way, yet it states your Obligation, and lays a Foundation for your coming to him; and if you reject him, you are as inexcusable, as the *Jews* that rejected him were.

2dly, Consider whom it is you will be gathered to, when gathered unto *Shiloh*: surely they that know his Name will put their Trust in him, and so gather to him, *Psal. xxiv. 9, 10. Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, that the King of Glory may come in*: O, who would not cast open the Gates of their Hearts to receive such an honourable Guest! O, if you knew what a glorious One Christ is, you could not find in your Heart to reject and despise him: He is not a Man simply, or an Angel, but a God-Man, the Lord of Men and Angels. It is not possible to tell what Glory is in him, for God is in him. *Great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh*, 1 *Tim. iii. 16.* A God-head dwelling in our Flesh is the World's Wonder: It is such a Mystery, that the World cannot receive it;
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but this is the Gospel that we preach, *2 Cor. v. 19. That God is in Christ, reconciling the World to himself: O think, what of God is in Christ!* (1.) the Authority of God is in him, *Exod. xxiii. 21. My Name is in him*; this is his proper Name, *Shiloh*, the Sent, Authorised, and Sealed of the Father, *John vi. 27. He came in his Father's Name*, as well as his own, to seek and save lost Sinners. As the Authority of God, so, (2.) The Wisdom and Power of God is in him. *1 Cor. i. 24. We preach Christ crucified, &c. the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*; all the Treasures of Divine Wisdom, and all the Magazine of Divine Power are in him: And not only so, but again, (3.) The Spirit of God is in him, *Isa. lxii. 1. I have put my Spirit upon him, that he may bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles*. He hath not only the Spirit of Wisdom to contrive for the best, and the Spirit of Power to save to the uttermost, but also the Spirit of all Grace to confer upon the People; and shall not the Gathering of the People be to him? O, What of God is in him! (4.) The Righteousness of God is in him, and his Righteousness is the Righteousness of God, which is revealed to you in this Gospel, from Faith to Faith, *Rom. i. 17*. (5.) The Love of God is in him, for Divine Love is wrapt up in this Garment of Flesh and Blood, *1 John iv. 9. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him*. (6.) The Mercy of God is in him, O poor Sinner, when you come to the last Gasps, readily God's Mercy will be your Cry; but in vain will you seek God's Mercy, to the Prejudice of God's Justice; and behold, Justice and Mercy meet together, and kiss one another, only in Christ: Mercy will vent no otherwise, but in Christ, in whom alone God is well pleased, and by whom his Justice is satisfied. What shall I say? (7.) The Salvation of God is in him. *Acts iv. 12. Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is no Name given under Heaven, &c. Yea,* (8.) The Fulness of God is in him, *Col. i. 19. For it hath pleased the Father,*

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ber, that in him should all Fulness dwell; and accordingly, Col. ii. 9. In him dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily. None of God's Attributes and Excellencies are out of him; he is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, &c. There is enough here to provoke all the World to gather to him.

3dly, Consider what you must be gathered to, if you be not gathered unto *Shiloh*. (1.) If you be not gathered to Christ, you will be gathered to your Idols and Lusts: And have you not provoked God too much already, by gathering towards that Airth? May not the Time past suffice you to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles? Will you prefer a bale Lust to a blessed Jesus? a Lust that will damn you, to a Jesus that would save you? Again, (2.) If you be not gathered to Christ, the best Airth you can pretend to go to, is to be gathered to the Law as your Husband: And O, is a broken Covenant of Works a better Bargain, think you, than Christ? Nay, nay, *As many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse*, Gal. iii. 10. that is, As many as think to be justified and accepted of God by their Obedience to the Command of the Law, they are under the Threatning and Curse of the Law; for, *Cursed is every One that continues not in all Things, &c.* for thus you're a Debtor to do the whole Law, Gal. v. 3. and, because you cannot pay the Debt of Obedience to the Command, you must ly under the Debt of Satisfaction to the Curle: And under the heavy Curse and Condemnation of the Law is your Soul gathered, while you're out of Christ. Yea, (3.) If you be not gathered to Christ, you must be gathered to the Devil; for there is no Mids, either Christ or the Devil must be your Master: If Christ be not entertained, you entertain the Devil in his Room; and do you consider what Sort of a Guest he is? He is a Guest that will blind you; for he is *the God of this World, that blinds the Minds of them that believe not*. He is a Guest that will blast you, and blast every Word to you that you hear, or else run away with it, that you may never get Good of it; for he catches away

away the very Seed that is sown in the Heart, *Matth. xiii. 19.* He is a Guest that will deceive you, by persuading you that you have either been gathered to Christ already, and that you're a good enough Believer, or else that it is Time enough for you to be gathered to Christ: And so he is in a Word a Guest that will destroy you and devour you, as well as delude you; for *the Devil goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.* And as now he is your Tempter, so afterwards he will be your Tormentor: Therefore again, (4.) Let me tell you, If you be not gathered to *Shiloh*, you must be gathered to Hell; for *he that believes not shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. And it is not the Minister that says it, it is the *Say* of the God of Truth; and if his *Say* be not enough, know he hath sworn, as well as said it, *Heb. iii.* penult. *He swears in his Wrath, that you shall not enter into his Rest.* And to whom does he swear thus in his Wrath? Even to them that believe not. O there is no little Wrath abiding that Soul against whom God swears in his Wrath; It will be Wrath proportioned to the Worth of that Blood of Christ which you do trample under your Feet. O *how shall you escape, if you neglect so great Salvation!* Let not the Devil persuade you, that all these Things are but Fancies; for, when Death's cold Sweat begins to break upon you, you'll find them to be sad Realities, if you be not gathered unto *Shiloh*. And therefore, again,

4thly, Consider what Things are a-gathering, that should hasten your Gathering in to *Shiloh*. Clouds are gathering fast in our Sky; a Cloud of Wickedness, a Cloud of Error, a Cloud of Wrath, a Cloud of Death. (1.) A Cloud of *Wickedness* is gathering; nay, this Cloud is already gathered to such a Blackness, that we cannot say the Iniquity of the *America* is not yet full, or that the Iniquity of *Britain* and *Ireland* is not yet full; Nay, our Covenant-breaking, Covenant-burning, Covenant-burying Sin and Defection, beside all our other Evils, have made our Cup full, some Time ago. But it seems God hath a Mind that our Cup should

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run over, that so his Cup of Judgments may run over also ; for a Cloud of Wickedness is gathering more and more. (2.) Clouds of *Error* are gathering also ; a black Cloud especially of *Arianism*, which threatens the Destruction of the very Foundation of Christianity ; *And if the Foundations be destroyed, what shall the Righteous do?* Of this I spoke formerly ; therefore I shall only say, When these Clouds of Wickedness and Error are gathering to a prodigious Blackness of Darkness it is Time for us to be gathering to *Shiloh*, who is the Way and the Truth ; the Way to walk in, in Opposition to the Way of Wickedness ; and the Truth to be believed, in Opposition to all the Paths of Error. But moreover, these black Clouds bode more a coming. (3.) There is a Cloud of *Wrath* gathering over *Britain* ; a Cloud of Judgment and Calamity is gathering over *Scotland*, and hath been gathering these many Years bygone, especially since the Time that *Scotland* was incorporate with her Neighbour : A Cloud of Wrath hath been gathering over us both as a Church and Nation ; What Drops have fallen out of that Cloud, to the Rending and Dividing of our Church, and to the Sinking and Impoverishing of our State ; what Clouds of Disorder and Confusion are hovering over our Head is too well known : Yea, a Piece of the Cloud is already broken about *Glasgow* within this Fourtnight : but the Lord knows what will be the End of these Things. more dreadful Showers of temporal Judgments are in all Appearance hastening on : And O, is it not Time to be gathering in to *Shiloh*, the only Place of Soul-safety ? They that are in him have the Lee side of the Bush, whatever Way the Wind blow. But tho' you should escape the Cloud of national Judgments, yet there is a Cloud of personal Affliction gathering, be it Sickness on your Body, or the like : Is it not best to be under Covert before the Shower come on ? Or, if you should escape that, yet, (4.) Certainly there is a Cloud of *Death* gathering and coming upon you, as fast as Days, and Hours, and Moments flee away ; and if your Bodies be gathered

shered to the Grave before your Souls be gathered to *Shiloh*, you'll be miserable as long as God shall be blessed, that is for ever and ever. You may make a Shift to live as merrily as you can now; but, *What will you do in the Day of Visitation?* Isa. x. 3. What will you do when the King of Terrors is gathering his Forces against you, and when you shall be gathered before God's awful Tribunal? &c.

5thly, Consider how long he hath been offering to gather you. And how oft, O Sinner, would he have gathered you, as a Hen does her Chickens under her Wings, but ye would not? How long? Even all Day long, *Rom. x. last. All Day long have I stretched forth my Hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying People.* God hath been stretching out his Arm to get a Grip of you, even the Arm of his Grace in the Gospel-offer and Invitation, and you're not gripped to this Day. All the Day long that the Gospel sun hath been shining have I been stretching out my Arms, says God; for God counts the Time how long he waits upon you. he reckons up the Time how long you let him stand knocking at the Door of your Heart: He counts every Hour's Refusal, and every Year's Refusal, tho' it be Forty Years; *Forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation.* God hath been calling on some of you Ten, Twenty, Thirty, Forty Years, and, it may be, to gray Hairs, but he counts the Time how long: He hath been chafing you with his Grace, while you have been but chafing Feathers in the Wind, delighting your selves in nothing but Vanity, yea lying Vanity, forsaking your own Mercy; as Persons that have neither Care for Heaven, nor a Fear for Hell. What if the Time be now come, wherein he is saving, I'll wait no longer; *Ephraim is joined to his Idols, let him alone*; If this very Call be slighted, my Spirit shall strive no more with you; I have long sought your Kindness, and you refused it; I offered my Kindness, and you thought nothing of it; *I would have gathered you, and ye would not?* The Cause of your Damnation then, if you perish, is not in God, but in you,

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it is not in his Act of Reprobation, but in your Act of Rebellion and wicked Will. You're a gainsaying and rebellious People against the God that stretcheth forth his Hands towards you: Say not then, What ails God at me? but rather, What ails your wicked Nature at God? O may conquering Grace at length come! But again,

6thly, Consider what Relation Christ stands in to the People, that the Gathering of the People may be to him: Not only is *Shiloh* come in our Nature, but he is come in the Capacity of a *Shiloh*, that is, the *Sent of God*, under such manifold Relations to the People as may engage the Hearts of the People. Since the Text makes him the *Sent of God*, let us see what he is sent for, and whether the People have any Concern. He is sent to be the Saviour of the People, *Luke ii. 11. To you is born in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World, Joh. iv. 42.* Is he sent to be the Saviour of the People; and shall not the Gathering of the People be to him? He is sent to be the Deliverer of the People, *Rom. xi. 29. There is come out of Zion the Deliverer, that shall turn away Ungodliness from Jacob.* O shall he come to deliver the People, and none of the People come to be delivered by him? He is sent to be the Helper of the People; yea, all the Help of the People is laid upon him, *Psal. lxxxix. 19. I have laid Help upon One that is Mighty; O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy Help.* Is he the Helper of the People, and the Help it self; and shall not the People come to him, to seek his Help, and take his Help? He is sent to be the Prophet of the People, *Isa. l. 4. The Lord hath given him the Tongue of the Learned, to speak a Word in Season to the Weary.* He is the only powerful Preacher and Teacher of the People; never Man spake like this Man: And should not the People hear him? *This is my beloved Son, &c. hear ye him.* He is sent to be the Priest, and the Sacrifice of the People, *Eph. v.*

2. As he is a Priest for ever, so he gave himself to be an Offering, and a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Savour unto God; and all was, that the People may gather under the Covert of the Blood of the sacrifice. Again, he is sent to be the King of the People, *Psal. ii. 6. I have set my King upon my holy Hill of Zion.* Shall he have no Subjects for your Part? &c. He is sent to be the Friend and Favourer of the People: hence called, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners; not a Friend to their Sins, but such a Friend to their Souls, as to save them from their Sins. He is sent to be the Justifier of the People, the Justifier of them that believe in Jesus: Yea, hence, he is said to justify the Ungodly, for he came not to be a Condemner, but a Justifier, *John iii. 17. God sent not his Son to the World, to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him, might be saved.* O shall not guilty People come to him to be justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of *Moses*? He is sent, *1 Pet. ii. 25.* to be the Shepherd and Bishop of the People, that the People may return unto him, as the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls. He is sent to be the Physician of the People; hence, his Name is *Jehovah-Rophi*, the Lord that healeth thee: And as many as touched him were healed. The Whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick: And, who are they that need not his Healing? therefore let the Gathering of the People that need Healing be to him. He is sent to be the Witness, the Leader and Commander of the People, *Isa. lv. 4. Behold, I have given him for a Witness, a Leader and Commander of the People;* and all that the Gathering of the People may be to him. He is sent to be a Counsellor, a Father, and a Prince of the People, *Isa. ix. 6. To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulders.* He is sent to be the Builder of the People, and the Foundation-stone, upon which the People should build, *Zech. vi. 13. Even he shall build the*

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*Temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the Glory. Isa. xxviii. 16. Behold I lay in Zion, for a Foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foundation; and all that the Gathering of the People may be to him. He is sent to be the Blessor of the People, that the People may gather to him for a Blessing, Acts iii. last. God having raised up his Son Jesus, hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every One of you from his Iniquities. He hath sent him to bless the People; and God's Blessing will light on all them that gather to him for a Blessing: Men shall be blest in him, and all Nations shall call him blessed. He is sent to be the Standard-bearer of the People, Sing. v. 10. He is the Chief, the Standard-bearer among ten thousand: Hence he is called the Ensign of the People, and to it shall the Gentiles seek, Isa. xi. 10. Ought not then the Gathering of the People be to their Standard-bearer and Ensign? He is sent to be the Burden-bearer of the People; behold, the Burden of your Sins is laid upon him, Isa. liii. 6, 8. The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all, or made them to meet on him. He hath gathered together all the Sins of the People, and laid them on his Back, that the Gathering of the People may be to him, as the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World. As the Burden of our Sins, so the Burden of our Sorrows is laid upon him, Isa. liii. 4. Surely he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows: The Burden of our Wounds, and Bruises and Stripes was laid upon him; v. 5. He was wounded for our Sins, and bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was laid upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. All the Wounds that we should have got with the Sword of God's Wrath, and all the Stripes that should have been laid upon our Back to Eternity, were gathered together, and laid upon Christ's Back. And why was the Burden of all the Sins and Sorrows of the People laid upon him, but that the Gathering of the People might be to him, as the Burden bearer of the People? What shall I say? He is sent, not only to
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be all Relations, but all Things to the People. He is sent to be the Covenant of the People, *Iſa. xlii. 6. I'll give thee for a Covenant of the People.* He is sent to be the Glory of the People; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People *Iſrael.* He is sent to be the Hope of the People: *He is our Hope,* ſays the Apoſtle; and, *The Lord ſhall be the Hope of his People, Joel iii. 16.* He is ſent to be the Deſire of the People; therefore it is ſaid of him, The Deſire of all Nations ſhall come. He is ſent to be the Propitiation of the People, *1 John ii. 2.* He is ſent to be the Salvation and Conſolation of the People: *Behold thy Salvation comes;* and he is called the Conſolation of *Iſrael.* He is ſent to be the Door of the People; *I am the Door,* &c. Again, he is ſent to be the Way of the People; *I am the Way; no Man comes to the Father, but by me.* He is ſent to be the Ladder of the People; he is the true *Jacob's Ladder*, that reaches from Earth to Heaven, by which alone we can climb up to Glory. And O ſhould not the Gathering of the People be to him? And becauſe they cannot of themſelves enter in at this Door, nor walk in this Way, nor climb this Ladder, therefore he is ſent to be the Leader of the People; I'll lead the the Blind in a Way they know not, and in Paths that they have not known: Yea, and to be the Strength of the People, that the People may gather to him, and truſt in the Lord *Jehovah*, in whom there is everlaſting Strength. He is ſent to be the Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption of the People, *1 Cor. i. 30.* He is made of God unto us, all theſe Things; even he who is the Lord our Righteouſneſs. And, that he might be a perfect Law-biding Righteouſneſs of the People, behold with Wonder, alſo he ſent him to be the Sin of the People, and the Curſe of the People, *2 Cor. v. laſt. He hath made him to be Sin for us, that we might be the Righteouſneſs of God in him. Gal. iii. 13. To redeem us from the Curſe of the Law, he was made a Curſe for us.* What ſhall I ſay? He is the Redeemer of the People, the Surety of the People,

and

and the Advocate of the People, the Ransom of the People. *Shiloh* is come, and he is sent of God, to be all Relations, and all Things to the People, that the Gathering of the People may be to him. God hath put all the Privileges of the People into his Hands, that he may be the Light and Life of the People, who is therefore called, the Light of the World, and the Life of the World. He hath put all Gifts, and Graces, and Fulness in his Hand, for the Peoples Use and Behoof: He hath received Gifts for Men, even for the Rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them. And is there nothing in all this to be a Motive or Argument for gathering the People unto him? Is he sent for all these Ends to the People, and shall not the People be gathered to him? O may the People come to him, who is the All of the People!

7thly, Consider what House-room there is in him, for the People to gather unto: And, (1.) He is a hiding House for the People to gather to, *Isa. xxxii. 2.* A man shall be a hiding Place from the Storm, a covert from the Tempest, &c. Behold he is a hiding House, a Shelter House, a Refuge for the People, a Sanctuary for the People, that the People may flee to him, saying with the Psalmist, *I flee to thee to bide me.* (2.) He is a Dwelling-House for the People to gather to. *Psal. xxi. 1.* He that dwells in the secret Place of the most High, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty: And O they that dwell in him, they dwell on high, and the Place of their Defence is the Munition of Rocks. They that are once gathered to him, he and they do mutually inhabit one another, in the Communion of the Holy Ghost, *1 John iv. 13.* Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, by his Spirit which he hath given us. (3.) He is a working House for the Gathering of the People to; not one spiritually good Work can be performed out of him, for without him we can do nothing, *John xv. 5.* But when One gets in to this House, then he is like a Man in his working House, that hath all his working Instruments and Tools,

Tools at his Hand, without which he could not work at his Trade: Yea, then he hath Christ himself for his working Hand; I can do all Things through Christ strengthening me. He performs all my Work for me, his strength being made perfect in my Weakness. (4.) He is the Bathing-House for the Gathering of the People to, *1 John 1. 7. The Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin; If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me:* He himself is the Fountain open to the House of David for Sin and for Uncleanness. Here alone it is, that the filthy-leprous People can get their Souls bathed and purged, and must gather to him for that End, saying, *Purge me with Hyssop* &c. (5.) He is the Treasure-House for the People to gather unto. Where must the Gathering of the People be, but to the only Store-House? Poor People may be here supplied out of his unsearchable Riches, for *in him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.* Col. ii. 3. It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell, that out of his Fulness we might receive Grace for Grace. (6.) He is the Pleasure-House for the Gathering of the People unto. He is a Pleasure-House, both for God, and for the People of God; such a Pleasure House for God to dwell in, that as God is well pleased in him, reconciled and satisfied in him, in whom his Soul delights, he is infinitely well pleased with all that gather into him, they are accepted in him, and that with Pleasure, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased:* And when once Sinners are gathered in to him, O they are well pleased also; yea, *abundantly satisfied with the Fatness of his House.* *1 Cor. x. 27. In whom believing, we rejoice, with Joy unspeakable.* &c. In his Presence there is Fulness of Joy. There is no House of Pleasure in the World like this. (7.) He is the Magazine House for the Gathering of the People to. All our Magazines for Military Provision are in him. He indeed is like the Tower of David, built for Armoury, where there hangs a Thousand Bucklers, all Shields of mighty Men, *Song iv. 4. for all the Be-*

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liever's Spiritual Armour, whereby he must fight against the Devil, the World and the Flesh, is hanging in this House; and therefore, whenever he is for fighting, he is to put on the whole Armour of God, and to be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might: Never will a Soul get a happy Stroke given to the Devil, or Corruption, without Armour got out of this Magazine-House. Here lies all the Powder and Ammunition, whereby the most subtil Engines of Hell may be blown up, and broken. (8.) He is the Banqueting-House for the Gathering of the People to, *Song ii. 4. He brought me to the Banqueting-House, and his Banner over me was Love.* It is remarkable and strange, that there should be Need of a Banner in a Banqueting-House. A Banner is for War and indeed his People, when they are fed in his House, they are fitted for War: But, O a Banner of Love is good Provision for War; the Manifestation of the Love of God in Christ heartens and strengthens the Soul, both for Work and Warfare. He fights best, when he feeds best upon the Love and Favour of God in Christ, who himself is both the Banqueting-House, the Banner, and the Feast; he is the Food, his Flesh is Meat indeed, &c. There he feeds them with his Pardon and Peace, he feeds them with his Righteousness and Fulness; yea, there he sups with them, and they with him: And this Feast of fat Things is provided for all People, *Isa. xxv. 6.* that they may gather in to the Banqueting-House: He only is the Victual-House, the true *Bethlehem*, the House of Bread. (9.) He is the Praying-House, for the gathering of the People to; the true Temple and House of Prayer for all People, *Isa. lvi. 7.* Would you have a House for praying acceptably in, so as to be ay heard and answered, whenever you pray? Here it is, there is no House of Prayer like it; and wherever you go, be it to a Corner or Closet, this House is at Hand for you to run in to, that you may be accepted in the Beloved; and when you go in to this House of Prayer, you shall have whatever you ask, that the Father may

may be glorified in the Son, *John* xiv. 13. (10.) He is the Praising House for the Gathering of the People to, *Psal.* lxxxiv. 4. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy House, they will be still praising thee.* And indeed the farther you go into the House of Prayer, the more will you find it to be the House of Praise. Much Praise, and Honour, and Glory in the highest, does God get in this House; whereas People, out of this House, do nothing but dishonour and affront him. But, O may all the People praise him, by gathering in to this House! O what notable Housing is there here for the People! therefore let the Gathering of the People be to him. In a Word, he is the Meeting-House with God, *There will I meet with thee, even on the Mercy-Seat, between the Cherubims*, *Exod.* xxv. 22. Here is House-Room for all the People. There is a Sign hung up over the Door of the House, with this Inscription, *Whosoever will, let him come*, *Rev.* xxii. 17.

8thly, Consider there is a Gathering Place for the People in the Lord Jesus, with a *What tho'* written below the Inscription. (1.) *What tho'* you have never come in to this Day, yet now you are welcome to come in, *tho'* you have been standing without all your Days till now; it is come to the Eleventh and last Hour, *Matth.* xx. 6. *Why stand ye here all the Day idle?* he calls you in to his Working-House. (2.) *What tho'* you have played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to, *Jer.* iii. 1. *Tet return again unto me, saith the Lord;* yea, *Isa.* i. 18. *Tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow, tho' they be red as Crimson, they shall be white as Wool.* Have you been a Drunkard, &c. why, *such were some of you*, &c. read *I Cor.* vi. 9, 10, 11. (3.) *What tho'* you have been untoward and untractable hitherto, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to, *Isa.* lvii. 17. *For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I bid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the Way of his own Heart; yet I have seen his Ways and will heal him.* (4.) *What tho'* you have been making God to

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serve with your Sins, and wearying him with your Iniquity, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to him; for behold what he says, even with Respect unto such, *Isa. xliii. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine Iniquity, &c. Put me in Remembrance. (5.)*

What tho' you have been guilty of the most provoking and grievous Backsliding, yet there is Place in him for you gathering unto, *Jer. iii. 14, 22. Return, ye Backsliding Children, for I will heal your Backslidings; yea, I'll heal your Backslidings, and love you freely. (6.)* What tho' your outward Circumstances in the World be never so mean and contemptible, so

as no Body cares for you, more than the Dirt of the Street, and you are cast out at all Hands; yet there is Place in him for your gathering to, for he gathers the Outcasts of Israel. And *Jam. ii. 5. Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World, to be rich in Faith, and Heirs of a Kingdom? (7.)* What tho' many have gathered in to *Shiloh* already, yet there is Room enough and Place enough for you to gather in also; for, as it is said in the Parable, *Luke xiv. 22. Tho' many were gathered in to the Supper, yet there was Room; so*

here, tho' Thousands and Ten thousands have been gathered to *Shiloh*, since he came, and before he came, yet there is Room, there is Place for you: As he says, In his Father's House are many Mansions; so say I of *Shiloh's* House, that there are many Mansions therein, with him there are Multitudes of Mercies for Multitudes of Sinners: O, who can reckon the Multitudes of his tender Mercies? who can comprehend the Vastness of this Gathering-Place? It would hold Thousands of Worlds, let be one World; therefore let not that stand in the Way of your Gathering unto *Shiloh*.

(8.) What tho' you could never think that there was any Place in him for you, nor any Mercy for the like of you; yet nevertheless there is a Gathering-Place in him for you, *Isa. lv. 8. For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, &c. and, As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Thoughts higher than your Thoughts.* Therefore, (9.) What tho' you be unwor-

Why to come to him, yet there is Place in him for unworthy Sinners to gather in to. Are you unworthy of him? Well I wot that is true, as true a Word as ever you spake; but the more unworthy you are, the more welcome to him, who hath Worth enough for you and him both: He expects no Worth to be in you, till once you come to him. What is it that makes you unworthy? Is it, that you are poor, miserable, wretched, blind and naked? Or is it, that you are stupid and senseless, and know not that you are in these dismal Circumstances? Why, he makes that the very Reason of his inviting you to gather in to him; *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and knowest not that thou art wretched, &c. Rev. iii. 17, 18. therefore I counsel thee to buy of me Gold.* Unworthy Sinners, gather in to that well-furnished House, where all you need to make you happy and holy is to be had: And say not you are unfit to come; for there you see, that even impotent and unsensible Sinners, whom we are ready to shut out, Grace is ready to take in. Yea, (10.) What tho' you be unable to come to him, and gather in to *Shiloh*, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to him, *Isa. xl. 29. For he gives Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might he increaseth Strength.* If you would be gathered, he stands ready to reach you his Helping-Hand, and bids you take Hold of his Strength, that you may make Peace with him, and you shall make Peace with him, *Isa. xxvii. 3.* Yea, what tho' you have been unwilling all your Days till this very Moment, unwilling to be gathered? Yet he who says, How oft would I have gathered you, and you would not? is now saying, If you would be gathered, I am here, and my Power and Grace is at your Service, for drawing you nearer. Yea, what tho' you find much Unwillingness and Enmity this Moment in your Heart against him; Yet if you would be content that he break your Enmity, and make you willing, O there is Place, there is Place in him for you to gather in to. Yea, What shall I say? Tho' you be as unwilling as ever

you was, and your Ill-will against him is ready to land you in the burning Lake ; yet know, O devilish Enemy to God and Christ, he is calling you to come to him, saying, *Whosoever will, let him come.* O, will you not be gathered ? Why will you die ? As I live, I have no Pleasure in your Death ; I have infinitely greater Pleasure in your Gathering to *Shiloh*, in whom all my Attributes are glorified and well pleased. And if this Call do at last kindle a secret Will and Desire in your Soul, saying, O that he would come and gather me ! Behold his gathering Arms are stretched out towards you, and you shall be as welcome to him, as ever any Soul was, since the World began. Well, is there such a Gathering Place for the People here, such a Gathering-House, with so many *What the's* written on the Sign of the House, or the Face of the Door, to invite all Passengers, that are travelling to Eternity, to come in, and be happy for ever ? And shall there be no Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* ? May we hope, that Divine Power hath made some to be willing, and that they are either saying, Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God ; or else, Lord, come and draw, come and gather, and get the Glory to thy Name for ever.

Having offered these Motives and Considerations ; I should offer next some Directions. It is Divine Power only that does the Business ; and therefore, I shall only give you those two Directions, in case you would know how to manage, so as you may not be deceived in this Matter. If I could help you to Heaven, I think, I would desire to do it ; and, for your Help and Direction, in order to your right gathering to *Shiloh*, I would say to you, (1.) Never satisfy your selves with gathering about him and his Ordinances, without gathering to him. Many, like the Multitude in the Gospel, may gather about him, yea, so near as to press upon him, while there was but one poor Woman, that was gathered to him, and touched him. Some Body hath touched me, says Christ : Why, say the Disciples, the Multitude press upon you ; and what mean

mean you, Lord, by that, Some-body hath touched me? Nay, but as one of the Fathers said, *Turba premit, fides tangit*; the Multitude press, but Faith toucheth. Satisfy not your selves then, I say, with a Gathering about him, unless you be gathered to him: People may gather about a Tree to pluck the Fruit thereof, but it is another Thing to be gathered to it, so as either to become a Branch, or have an Interest in it; even so may some People eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Life, in respect of common Providence, common Graces, common Influences; but it is another Thing to have an Interest in the Tree, and Union to it: So here, &c. O Sir! say you, that is a hard Note, that casts me all down again. Why, may the Lord himself bring down all false Refuges: But in case it perplex any poor Soul, that hath been sitting under Christ's Shadow at this Occasion, and his Fruit hath been sweet to their Taste, and they may think, that all they got, is but only the Fruit, while they have no Union to, or Interest in the Tree. *Quest.* Say you then, How shall One know if he only eats of the Fruit, and hath no Interest in the Tree? In Answer to which, I'll endeavour to illustrate it by this plain Simile; You know, when a Man hath no Interest in the Tree of a Garden, if he get the Fruit, he cares not what come of the Tree, tho' the Branches of it were all broken down; He loves the Fruit, and takes it, but the Tree is not his own, he hath no Concern about it: But, the Man that hath an Interest in the Tree, tho' he loves the Fruit, yet he loves the Tree better than the Fruit; and therefore, he would rather that People should take all the Fruit away from him, than break and destroy the Branches of the Tree; for he esteems the Tree better than all the Fruit that grows upon it. The Application thereof is easy; for, even so the Hypocrite that eats of the Fruit of the Tree of Life, as it were, but hath no Interest in the Tree; the Fruit, the Frame, the Enlargement, or the like, is all that he wants; the Gifts and common Graces he gets, is what he solaceth himself withal; he rests there, and sits down satisfied, without Christ himself, or any true Love to him, and

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and unfeigned Concern for his Glory and Interest : Self is upmost with him, and therefore he pleases himself with the Fruit, and loves it more than the Tree. But, the true Believer, that is gathered to Christ, he loves the Fruit indeed, and takes Pleasure in the Communication ; but the Tree it self is above all Things to him, and the Fruit he tasted still the more recommends the Tree to him. O Christ's Gifts are sweet, but himself sweetest of all ! The Believer's Frame is like the Frame of a Picture ; he is not taken up with the Frame, but with the Picture that is within the Frame, even Christ, who is the Picture of God, the Image of the invisible God. See, I say, that it be Christ himself, that you are gathered to. (2.) Be still about his Hand, in the Use of appointed Means, but with a constant Eye to Divine Power : Let Means and Ordinances be still used ; For, tho', as they are your Performances, they cannot be profitable, yet, as they are his Ordinance, he may put a Blessing in them. Therefore, be still in the King's High-way, in the Use of Means ; for, tho' the natural Use of Means, and God's saving Grace, have no Connection, yet there is far less a Connection betwixt that Grace, and the Neglect of Means. The poor Begger, that needs an Alms from the King, goes to the King's High-way, where he passes ; and surely he is nearer his Purpose, than if he should go to the Top of a Mountain, where the King never comes : So, be you still in the Use of Means in the Lord's Way ; but rest not there, lest you be like One, that upon Pretence of seeking a Treasure on the other Side of a River, should come to the Boat, which is the Mean, and rest there, without going further ; Why, he may thus miss the Treasure for ever. In your Use of the Means, look beyond the Means, and cry for Almighty drawing Power, without which it is simply impossible you can make one Step towards *Shiloh*. God knows, you can do nothing this Way your self, and he does not expect it of you, that you should come to him in your own Strength ; nay, if you essay to do so, you but affront him, who is the Strength
of

of *Israel*; and ye disparage his Power, as if a Creature, far less a filthy sinful Creature, dead in Trespasses and Sins, would act independently of him. O then, cast your self ay into his Almighty gathering Arms, crying, O Power, Power. Power of the Eternal Spirit of God, come! Cry for the powerful Conviction of the Spirit, whereby you may see how far off you are from God and Christ: They that are gathered to him, are made to see how far they are separate from him, and to say, Lord, I am lying in the Arms of the Devil, and I know not how soon I may be with him in Hell; O pity, pity, of thy sovereign Mercy! Cry also for the powerful Illumination of the Spirit, that you may see a God in Christ; not an absolute God, sitting on the Throne of flaming Justice, but on the Mercy-seat, sprinkled with the Justice-satisfying Blood of the Lamb, from whence Mercy does vent it self to the highest Honour, and greatest Glory of infinite Justice. Cry, in a Word, for the powerful Operation of the Spirit, the irresistible, efficacious Pull of his omnipotent Arm; O long for a Day of Power, a gathering Day! Many a black powerful Hinderance and Drawback you have: Every Lust says upon the Matter, If I can get my Will, he shall never be gathered to *Shiloh*; the Devil says, If I can get my Will, he shall never win to Christ; the World, and the Care of it, say the same; your graceless Neighbours and wicked Companions, say the same: There is a strong hellish Combination to hinder your coming to *Shiloh*. Yet nevertheless, tho' all the Intanglements of the World, all the Corruptions of the Heart, and all the Devils in Hell should join Counsel together, to keep your Soul back from Christ, one Divine Draught of the Cord of Love will make them all to yield. They are potent Enemies, but here is an omnipotent God, they are Mighty, but he is Almighty. O cry, and continue to cry for this gathering Power! and tho' you have been long seeking an omnipotent Pull of Divine Grace, and to your Sense have not got it, yet, you wait for it, and cry for it, it is a Thousand to One

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If you miss it : Nay, it cannot be, for he is a God of Judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him, *Isa. xxx. 18.* Judgment here, is not Judgment in Opposition to Mercy, but Judgment in Opposition to Folly ; that is, he is an infinitely wise God, that knows the best Time of coming and paying his Visit ; and because he is a God of Judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him. He hath long waited for you, O wait for him in his own Way ! And when he is stretching forth his Arms toward you in this Gospel, offering to gather you ; let your Heart cry to him, saying, Lord, thou that gathers the Lambs with thine Arm, O do thou not only stretch forth thine Arms towards me, but clasp thine Arms about me ; gather me, and I shall be gathered. If you be brought to this, I would hope the good Work were begun.

The *Third* Sort, to whom I proposed to direct my Exhortation, was to Believers, that are gathered unto *Shiloh*. My Exhortation to you is, That, thro' Grace, you would gather more closely to *Shiloh*, than ever you have done, so as to be rooted in him, and abide in him, *Col. ii. 7. John xv. 5.* O cry for more and more of his gathering Power and Grace, to bring you nearer and nearer to him : More particularly, (1.) Hath *Shiloh* come and gathered you to himself ? Then O live upon him, for that is the End, for which you are gathered to him, *Gal. ii. 20.* that the Life you live may be a life of Faith on the Son of God, who not only loved you, and gave himself for you, but gathered you also out of the stinking Grave of Sin and Misery, wherein you was. You need to live a Life of Dependence upon him ; for all other Things may soon fail you, and nothing in all the World may be left you, but himself. But, when the Spider's web is swept down, yet you may see the House standing ; even so, when the Cob-webs of Creature-confidences fail, Faith will see a sure Foundation to lippen to, tho' the Fig-tree should not blossom, &c. You'll every Day need to be living on him ; for as the Vessel that is full To-day needs a new Filling To-morrow,

and the Stomach that seemed to be satisfied just now, within a few Hours, will be empty and craving again; So, here, your Vessel may soon be empty, but tho' the Vessel be dry, the Fountain is not; tho' the Vessel be empty, the Fountain is full; and his Power to help, is a creating Power, whereby he can command Nothing in to a Being. (2.) Not only live on him, but live with him; let it appear, that you're gathered out of the World, by your living above the World, in the Place where *Shiloh* is, *Col. iii. 1. If you be risen with Christ, seek the Things that are above, where Christ sits at the Right-hand of God.* O! how unsuitable is it for them that are gathered to *Shiloh* in Heaven, not to have their Conversation in Heaven, like the Bird, they call the *Lapwing*, that hath a Crown upon her Head, and yet lives upon Excrements? Hath the Lord crowned you with his Loving-Kindness, and yet you live upon the Dung of this World? Hath he made you an Heir to a Kingdom, and yet you ly tumbling in the Ashes? Surely the Believer, that does not live above the World, he lives below himself. (3.) Are you gathered unto *Shiloh*? Then, not only live on him, and live with him, but live to him. For this Cause also; did he gather you to him, that you might live to him, and to his Glory and Honour, *2 Cor. v. 15. You are not to live to your selves, but to him that died for you, and rose again.* In him there is a Gathering of all Gifts, and Graces, and Fulness, and all Mediatorial Offices, and Divine Qualifications, for your Use and Behoof; and, to him, O Believer, should be the Gathering of all the Powers and Faculties of your Soul, that you may glorify and honour him! O let the Gathering of your Desires and Delights be to him, who is the Desire of all Nations, and the Delight of all the Saints and Angels in Heaven! Let the Gathering of your Thoughts and Meditations be to him, and the Meditation of his Name will be sweet. O let the Gathering of your Hearts and Affections be to him, for he is altogether lovely! Let the Gathering of your Prayers and Praises be to him. Begging and Blessing should

go together ; for you'll have Occasion to beg from him as long as you're out of Heaven, and you'll have Reason to bless him as long as you're out of Hell. Tho' you that are gathered to him have no Reason to fear Hell, *For there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ* ; yet you have ay Reason to bless, that you have escaped it. In a Word, let the Gathering of your Words and Actions be to him, so as you may put Honour upon him, before the World, by the whole Tenor of your Talk and Walk, that your Neighbours may take Notice of it, that you have been with Jesus, and that you are gathered to him : And let the Gathering of your Services and Sacrifice beto him, saying, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me ?* O render your humble Service to him, saying, *Truly I am thy Servant, thou hast loosed my Bands.* Render him the Love of your Hearts, the Calves of your Lips, and the Obedience of your Life. Thus you are to live to him. Again, (4.) Are you gathered to *Shiloh* ? O then, endeavour to gather Others to him ! See if you can get all that are in your Family to come to *Shiloh* with you ; saying with *Joshua*, *As for me, and my House, we will serve the Lord, whatever others do,* *Jsh. xxiv 15.* O have you been gathered to Christ ? And will you be careless tho' your Friends, your Children, be gathered to the Devil ? O hath Christ brought you to himself, and will he bring you to Glory, and gather you to Heaven ? And will you be easy, tho' all about you be gathered unto Hell ? No, no, that cannot be your Disposition, if you be a Believer indeed. If you be content in your Lifetime to serve him, you'll study to your Power, that Others may do the like. And, this is the Way to make the Love of Christ continue in the World ; for, when you teach your Neighbours, your Servants, your Children, the Way of the Lord, they, following your Example, may teach their Children too ; and this will go from Generation to Generation, so as Generations to come may praise the Lord ; or at least, it will not fail on your Part. O how is

it to be regrated, that few come to Christ ! and of the
 Few that come, how few do shew their Love, in en-
 deavouring to bring Others to him ? Therefore, O
 let this be amended, and endeavour, in the Place
 where you dwell, and the Station you're into, that by
 your holy Conversation, Others may be gathered un-
 to *Shiloh* too. (5.) Are you gathered ? O let not Be-
 lievers, that are gathered to *Shiloh*, forget their Ga-
 thering together for Christian-fellowship and Prayer,
Heb. x. 24, 25. Let us consider one another, to provoke
unto Love, and to good Works; not forsaking the Assem-
bling our selves together, as the Manner of some is, but
exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the
Day approaching. The Wicked, that are to be gather-
 ed to the burning *Tophet*, are making Speed in sin-
 ful Ways, and gathering in Clubs and Cabals, to
 hearten and harden one another : And, O shall not the
 Godly gather together, to exhort and excite one ano-
 ther in the Way to Heaven ; as Iron sharpens Iron, so
 does the holy Gathering of Saints use to sharpen the
 Edge of their Spirits in the Lord's Way : But since
 Fellowship-Meetings have been deserted, many Pro-
 fessors are blunted and rusted ; several Christian So-
 cieties are broken and evanisht, even at a Time, when
 they that fear the Lord should speak often one to ano-
 ther in Spiritual Conferences. O, if you be gather-
 ed unto *Shiloh*, let your Zeal for him appear, in re-
 storing and reviving these Christian Gatherings in a
 regular Manner ; and pray, That the Devil's scatter-
 ing Wind that he hath raised in our Day, for sepa-
 rating and dividing Ministers and Christians from one
 another, may be laid. (6.) To add no more, and to
 encourage you in the whole of your Christian Course,
 O you, that through Grace have been gathered to
Shiloh, take home with you the Comfort that belongs
 to your gathered State. As to these that are yet in a
 distant State, separate from the Lord Jesus, we have
 little Comfort to offer, if you abide there ; for in the
 Lord's Time you'll be gathered to the Grave, and af-
 ter that, you'll be gathered before the Tribunal of
 God,

God, to receive the dreadful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye Cursed* ; and, in all Appearance, some here will be gathered before that awful Tribunal, before they be gathered together here again : We are not all to meet, till we meet before the Fiery Bench of the Glorious Judge ; and if you be not gathered to him, as an amiable Jesus now, you must be gathered to him as a terrible Judge then. And, O that the Thoughts of this would excite poor Souls to think of gathering to *Shiloh* before they part, that they may part with God's Blessing, and not under his heavy Curse ! But, as to you that have been gathered unto Christ, I would have you know, that God allows you strong Consolation. You having fled for Refuge to the Hope set before you, you may rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God, that the Joy of the Lord may be your Strength, in the whole of your Work and Warfare, as you go through the Wilderness. You may rejoice in this, that as your Hearts are gathered unto *Shiloh* now, so your happiest Gathering Time is but coming ; for he that hath begun to gather you as Stones for the Spiritual Building, will never leave the Work, till the Building be completed, with Shoutings of, *Grace Grace* unto it. He will never give over gathering you, till you be completely happy : From Time to Time the Work will be advanced, by the Means of his Word and Ordinances, till the Consummation of the Work in Glory ; for he hath appointed a Gospel Minister for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till they all come, &c. *Eph. iv. 14.* He hath appointed these three fearful Things, Death, Judgment, and Eternity, to be Three happy Gatherings for you ; the initial Gathering being over, by your getting in to Christ, after your progressive Gathering is come to a Close, in your having finished your Course, and fought the good Fight of Faith, your glorious and consummate Gathering will take Place : The Day of Death will be the glorious Commencement of it, and Eternity will be the everlasting Continuation of it. The first Coming of

Shiloh

Shiloh hath ushered in a gracious Gathering, his second Coming will produce a glorious Gathering; but of these gathering Seasons, I formerly spoke at large: I only say therefore, that then, O Believer, then shall you be for ever with the Lord; and it is for this Reason you are now gathered to him, that there you may be for ever with him: And so ~~sure~~ as you are gathered to him in Time, so sure shall you be with him through Eternity; not only for ever with the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles; not only for ever with Angels and Arch-Angels; not only for ever with Saints and Seraphims; but for ever with the Lord; for none of these can make a Heaven without him. Christ himself will be the Centre of the Assembly, and Heart of the Meeting: And tho' now you are but with him for a Start, and he is with you but for a Moment, and so your Communion with him is but in transient Glances of his Glory; may be just now you are with him in the Banqueting-House, but instantly you are, as it were, at the Back of the Door; It is only for a little, but then for ever: And it is but a *little of him* that you have for a *little while*; Yet then, O then, shall you be for ever with the Lord, *Wherefore comfort one another with these Words*, 1 *Thes.* iv. last. Know, that being gathered to him on Earth, you shall be gathered to him in Heaven; and being gathered in Grace, you shall be gathered in Glory; for all the Promises of Grace and Glory are gathered in him, and you being gathered to him, are in him also, in whom all the Promises are *Yea* and *Amen*.

And, now this Gathering of the People here is to part; But, O happy Parting, to these who can date their first or farther Gathering to *Shiloh* from their Gathering to *Carnock*! For, part with whom you will, Christ and you shall never part again; whatever Clouds may be in your Sky, yet your Sun is risen, and will never set. But the most Part of you here were never yet gathered to *Shiloh*; and, O how can you find in your Heart to go away without him, and without so much as a Desire after him, who is the Desire of all

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Nations! For my own Part, I dow not think of your going away in such a Case. O, shall he have it to say, I would have gathered you, as a Hen does her Chickens under her Wings, but you would not! O, wherefore did you gather to this Place, if you would not be gathered to *Shiloh*? And if you be more willing to be gone, than willing to be gathered, Wo is me, that my Text will be no more but a Withels against you upon *Carnack-Green*, that you would not; and, that the Devil, and the World, and your Lusts, were more desirable to you; and you had more Heart to be gathered to them, than to be gathered to *Shiloh*. O then, heartless Parting, while you are content to part with *Shiloh* for ever, rather than part with a base Lust, or a black Devil. If that be not your Choice, then let your Heart say, in the Sight of the Living God if you can, Lord, I think I would be gathered, and would rather choose to die upon the Spot, than not to be gathered unto *Shiloh*; and, my Soul could wish, that all my dearest Lusts were buried in this Green, never to rise again, and that Christ might have my Heart for ever, in Room of them all. Why, Man, can you say that, to the Heart-searching God? Then, poor Soul, let me desire you to take the first convenient Closet or Corner you can get, and there tell him this over again more solemnly; and, at the same Time, blest him that ever *Shiloh* came to you, and that ever you felt the Vertue of this Promise, that *To him shall the Gathering of the People be.*

F I N I S.



